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EPOCHS

OF

CHURCH HISTORY

BY

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PORTLAND, ME.

BROWN THURSTON COMPANY

1894

270.04 P
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2767

Apostles' creed, p. 150

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THE study of history is now regarded as second to no other in importance and educating power to "those who would know." The present is the product of the past, and the future will be largely determined by the present. And no department of history is more interesting or instructive, than the history of the Christian Church. It has been the favorite study of Gladstone, the foremost English speaking man of our time, as it was of Macaulay and Melbourne, leaders of modern liberalism in state affairs. That the subject should have received so little attention among us until recently, is indeed lamentable, inasmuch as the neglect of it has been a fruitful source of narrow notions and provincial Philistinism. But a new and happier era has dawned upon us in this, as in so many other respects.

The following pages are offered as an impartial contribution to the cause of Historical Christianity, not so many as to discourage, nor yet so few as to make but little, or no distinct impression upon the reader's mind. The author has aimed to be candid and catholic, guided by the good old rule: In essenstials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.

EPOCHS OF CHURCH HISTORY

CHAPTER I.

PREPARATION OF THE WORLD FOR THE GOSPEL.

We are sometimes asked why the religion of Christ was reserved to so late a period in the world's history, why the nations were left to wander in darkness, error and sin? This is only another form of the question, why sin was permitted to enter the world, and death by sin? In other words, it is a part of the greater question as to the origin and prevalence of evil in the world. Strictly speaking, these and kindred questions belong to the province of philosophy. The gospel is etymologically and in fact, God's good news to a sinful world and a lost race, revealing the means of recovery. As such, it does not directly concern itself with the problem of evil in its origin, but with the more important, pertinent, and practical problem of its removal.

But as to the era of Christianity, it is not difficult to show how truly the apostle spake, when he declared that "in the fullness of time God sent forth His Son." In all the works of God there is a certain correspondence and harmony: thus, the lower generally precedes the higher, and time is a great element and essential factor. Many were the ages,

and marvelous the changes, which prepared the way for the introduction of the human race on earth, in any form, and in the simplest conditions of its existence. Man was "a mighty hunter" before he lived in the pastoral state, and was driven to this by the failure of game; afterward, and by the operation of the same law, he added agriculture; and to agriculture, manufactures; and to manufactures, commerce; and to commerce, civilization, including all the elevating and refining influences of modern states and society. The changes in the life of our western Indians present the phases through which the whole race has passed, and their history is, therefore, a picture of all human history.

Mankind, in the use of their proper faculties, grew in many directions. They built great cities, founded mighty empires, invented alphabets, and cultivated to a high degree of perfection, literature and the arts. But good living was the very particular in which man failed. It is true that they could see and approve the right, but they pursued the wrong. Moral evil, wrong-doing, was so wide-spread in the ages immediately preceding the gospel, that the foundations of society were undermined, the pillars were shaken and tottered to their fall.

In other respects, events were so ordered as to prepare the way for the new and higher type of life which was to be introduced by the movement on the

face of society and in the hearts of men of the same Divine Spirit, which, brooding over primeval darkness, said, "Let there be light." Physical powers preceded mental, and mental, moral. The mental was about as far as man could go of himself, and even on that line he did not, and could not, walk upright. The Assyrians and Egyptians could build cities and send forth armies. The Phœnicians could invent letters, and the Greeks, art. Rome reduced the world to her sway, but could not govern herself. But the Greek language furnished a fit vehicle to convey the ideas of Christianity, which no other existing language could adequately express. In like manner Rome reduced chaos to order in the political relations of mankind, and so opened the world to the preaching of the gospel and the planting of churches. In the olden time, "mountains interposed made enemies of nations," which were always at war with each other. As long as this was regarded as the normal condition of things, general intercourse and intercommunication were impossible, and without these, the gospel could not be "preached in all the world and to every creature."

The dispersion of the Jews, too, favored the dissemination of religious knowledge in such a form and degree as prepared the most advanced races to receive the gospel. And it is precisely on these lines that the gospel has advanced from that day to this,

and will advance to the end. By general laws, God educated the race, not all, but parts of it, up to the point where the reception of Christian ideas becomes, humanly speaking, possible. Then in the order and by the will of Providence, the gospel is preached to and received by them. The leaven cast into each city, nation and race, works and will work till the whole is leavened. And this work will go on till Christ comes the second time to raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness.

This sketch is so brief, too brief to admit of developing the points already made, that, in concluding it, we must with still greater brevity touch on two others often enforced from the pulpit, viz.: the sense of sin and guilt which the gospel of Christ alone can remove, our dread of the extinction of conscious existence at death, and our consequent longing for immortality, which the gospel alone brings to light. The world by its wisdom knew nothing of these things, and never could have known them. They are beyond its ken. By the gospel they stand or fall, and we and all men are shut up to the gospel for the fulfillment of our highest hopes, as well as the removal of our deepest fears. Despair on all these points had settled down upon the ancient world. The educated classes were skeptical in all things, and the wealthy led dissolute lives. The masses were sunk in superstition and ignorance, the dupes

of charlatans and pretenders to supernatural knowledge and power. Unrest and despair of deliverance were well-nigh universal. The hour before the dawn was the darkest. When all hope of human help had proved vain, "the day-star" from on high shone forth, and soon the Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in its rays, upon a world of pagan darkness. And to-day the light of the gospel shines with increasing luster. "Its beams upon the nations rise; they rise, but never set."

CHAPTER II.

RELATION OF THE JEWISH CHURCH TO THE CHRISTIAN.

THE point of the preceding chapter was, that in Church, as in other histories, there are epochs and eras, each of which is gradually developed from that which preceded it. It is equally true that Christianity itself is a development from Judaism, not indeed, on a natural, but on a supernatural plane. All attempts to explain the origin of Christianity on natural principles, as something evolved from the human consciousness, have signally failed, and ever must fail. The gospel is God's good news to man, first fully announced by Christ and His apostles, but partially disclosed in the earlier times by the prophets. God spake to the fathers by the prophets, but to us He has spoken by His Son. "The law came by Moses." First, the moral law, which Moses summed up in ten commandments, and Christ in two. Then, the ceremonial law, a part of which was of local and tribal significance, and a part, and that the greater part, both centered and culminated in Christ, at whose crucifixion the veil of the temple was rent in twain, signifying that the veil was re-

moved, that the old law had departed, and that the new law, fulfilled by Christ, was then and there ushered in under "the New Covenant" signed and sealed by the Savior's blood. This is the general statement. But beyond this, the inquiry always arises, "What is the precise value of the Old Testament to us?" How are we to regard it? Is it still binding? If it is in any degree, how far? And is it incumbent on Christians, as such, to defend the ancient law and the Jewish Scriptures? The best, the conclusive answer to these questions is given in the epistle to the Hebrews. That epistle is a part of the canon (inspired Scriptures) of the New Covenant, or Testament, and it is entirely devoted to a discussion of these questions, which arose in the apostolic age, and demanded a satisfactory solution then, as they do now. The agitation of this subject was inevitable among both Jews and Gentiles. Salvation is confessedly of the Jews. To them, in olden time, were committed the sacred oracles, containing a revelation of the Divine purposes and promises of mercy to man. To the Jews, Moses seemed the great Master whom they themselves were bound to obey, and, equally, all others admitted to the rites and privileges of the Jewish faith.

But Moses himself testified to the Jews, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up like unto me; him shall you hear in all things." And not

Moses only, but all the prophets, foretold the coming of a new and brighter day, the sealing of a new and better covenant, and the absolute authority of the future Messiah, or Anointed One. Christ having come, and declared by His resurrection to be the Son of God, claimed and exercised this absolute authority over all who called him Lord. To the Christian, whether of Jewish or Gentile birth, Christ is the Son, the first-born and heir of all things, by whom all things were made, and in whom they consist; *i.e.*, all things center in Him, and He is the source of all authority and power in heaven and on earth. Moses was but a servant in the household of faith, of which Christ is the ruler and head. Of course, it follows from this that, if on any points, Judaism is or appears to be at variance with Christianity, Judaism must give way. And the reason is obvious. Judaism was a local and transient phenomenon, Christianity a universal and permanent principle. Judaism was for the Jews, Christianity is for all men. Judaism was for a day, Christianity is for all time. In its very structure, the Jewish religion was necessarily limited and superficial, a temporary expedient, which, having accomplished the end of its appointment, was no longer to be maintained as a part of the Divine economy in the great scheme of human redemption. The sacrifices of the law were no longer to be offered, nor the high priest to enter

into the most holy place; for Christ had by His own blood offered, once for all, "a sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, full, perfect and sufficient for the sins of the whole world."

It appears, then, that while the Old Testament (or Covenant) preceded the New, it preceded only to prepare the way for the New. Though of higher antiquity, it was of lower authority. As in nature, so in grace, the inferior types, the lowest orders appear first, and are followed by the higher. It is neither irreverent nor far from the truth to say, that in all God's works the forces He creates and applies have to serve an apprenticeship before they are set free to do the higher work for which they were destined from the first. In God's plan, the preparatory stage seems to be necessary to the prepared. The Jews were "a people prepared of God" in comparison with the pagan world, and Christians are, in like manner, compared with the Jews. "The prophets prophesied until John, since then the kingdom of God is preached," and all men are invited to enter it, that therein they may richly enjoy the highest blessings which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

Nor is there any respect of persons with God, but in every nation he that serveth and loveth, is accepted of him. And let it never be forgotten that the foundation of all these blessings is laid in the gospel of

His Son, "in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell." He is the Head of God's Household of Saints, the Corner Stone of the living Temple, in which assemble all who "worship the Father in spirit and in truth," the King of Zion, the city of God, reigning in the hearts of all who obey the gospel.

Thus far, we have considered the Jewish Church or Covenant from the standpoint of the epistle to the Hebrews, which is, and ever must be, final and conclusive with all who profess and call themselves Christians. But what answer shall we give to those who doubt or deny the inspiration of the prophets.

Let them compare Abraham's knowledge of God, with the abominable idolatries which prevailed in all the world when Abraham lived. Was Abraham by nature so superior to all other men, or was he called of God from his father's house and his early home beyond the flood? Again, compare the Mosaic law embodied in the Ten Commandments, with the ethics of Moses' contemporaries, whether in Egypt, Assyria or Greece. Compare David's Psalms with the poems of Homer, as to the Divine nature and attributes,—the prophecies of Isaiah with the ethical speculations of the Greeks, the most gifted of mankind. Only by Divine inspiration can we account for such marvelous differences in favor of the Jews, "a stiff-necked and stubborn people."

On the other hand, it must be admitted that the highest standard of the Old Testament falls below the requirements of the new law, *i. e.*, the gospel. The tone of David's Psalms, in certain particulars, *e. g.*, as apparent indulgence of personal resentment and anger. It seems hardly possible that any one can be insensible to this disparity, or would deny it, unless hampered by a theory of inspiration which assumes that it must always be the same in kind and degree. Dismissing, then, all theories, let us accept the facts which compel us to recognize the rays of heavenly light — the enlightenment which God alone could give, but which He was pleased to give, not without measure to the prophets, but only to His dearly beloved Son, who is also the Sun of righteousness, shining by His own pure light, unmixed with any degree of darkness, and with perfect healing in His rays.

The relation of the Jewish Church to the Christian was similar to the relation of the colonies to the United States. The United States, as such, are not to be confounded with the colonies, though derived from them. But superior as are the states, they cannot be understood without a careful study of the colonial period, which preceded the Declaration of Independence and the War of the Revolution. The colonies became independent states with an independent existence, a new character and a higher ca-

reer. The old constitutions and laws were no longer operative or binding as colonial enactments. If some features of them are recognized, it is because they are incorporated into the new constitutions of the several states, and that of the United States.

So when the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us, a new life was breathed into the New Covenant, and the old dispensation was "ready to depart and vanish away."

CHAPTER III.

THE PLACE OF CHRIST IN CHURCH HISTORY.

The Advent of the Lord is the central fact in history, and draws a distinct division line between the ancient pagan, and the modern Christian, world. All that is distinctive, and most that is desirable, in modern society, is derived from His gospel. Whatever is most elevated in man, or refined in woman, is traceable to the influence of the Christian religion. The estate of matrimony, the duty of parents, the docility of children, parental affection and filial love, the charities of the rich and the contentment of the poor, the relief of the sick and needy, popular education and political rights,—all these things and others related to them, are indebted to Christianity either for their existence, or for their stability, purification and perpetuity. Hospitals for the sick, homes for the poor, for children and for the aged, asylums for the insane and idiotic, municipal and state appropriations for the systematic suppression of the sources of poverty, ignorance, vice and crime, were unknown to the world before Christ, but have sprung up like flowers along the paths made by the missionaries of the gospel.

That we really owe to the gospel this higher conception of the duty of the favored to the unfortunate and even criminal class, is evident from the consideration, that, while these ideas prevail in every Christian country, they are as remote from all existing, as they were from all ancient, pagan communities. Wherever truly preached and truly received, the gospel has proved itself the power of God to the breaking down of the kingdom of sin, Satan, and death, even in the present evil world; while it, and it alone, has "brought life and immortality to light," that blessed hope which lights our earthly life as a day-star from on high. Without this hope, life itself is a doubtful blessing, seeing we are encompassed by so many trials and temptations, and exposed to so many distresses which lead to, and end in, death. A man who does not extend his views beyond the present sensible world, cannot raise himself above the interests, the vexations, the pleasures and the passions which naturally engross and enslave the soul. All his thoughts are confined to the narrow circle of a month or a year, and he cannot open his mind to those impressions and aspirations which are based on the hope and "power of an endless life." Faith in a future world, if sincerely cherished, cannot fail to expand our views, elevate our aims and purify our desires, the affections of the heart "from which are the issues of life." This glorious hope of a happy im-

mortality, is indissolubly bound up with the assurances of Him who overcame death in His own person, and who showed Himself "the resurrection and the life." He also taught a doctrine of perfect morality, and a pure, spiritual religion, in opposition to a religion of endless rites and unreasonable ceremonies.

The difficulties we encounter in our efforts to estimate the exalted character of Christ, arise, in part, from its incomparable elevation. It is high, we cannot attain unto it. But the higher we can raise ourselves, the more clearly, shall we be able to discover its divine lineaments, though we shall never be able to comprehend it fully. Another serious obstacle is our familiarity with the letter of the gospel. Our situation in this respect is analogous to that of persons who live amidst sublime, natural scenery, waters like Niagara, or mountains like the Alps. At such sights as these, a stranger is fixed in exquisite delight. All his thoughts are engrossed and his emotions absorbed in contemplation of the scene. He feels that no language could describe its beauty, or image its sublimity. But those who have lived long in the immediate neighborhood of such objects, generally survey them without emotion, and even without thought. And such is too commonly the case with us in respect to the originality, the benevolence, the moral grandeur and sublimity of our Savior's character. If we could shake off the torpor which benumbs

our sensibility, and rouse ourselves to perception and feeling, this character would appear far different to us.

Though He lived in an age when religion was supposed to consist in superstitious rites and vain externals, an age when men thought it more essential in the sight of God that the hands should be washed, than that the heart should be cleansed; when, in brief, the prevalent system of religious faith had become a complication of irrational dogmas, folly and falsehood, we see the Savior as far removed from such conceptions, as light is from darkness, or heaven from earth. As a religious teacher, He penetrated to the seat of the affections in man, and touched the springs of human actions. Hence He laid more stress on purity of thought than on outward appearances. He inculcated nothing which in the light of modern science can be pronounced unreasonable or untrue. He never courted applause or popularity by accommodating His views to the prejudices of His hearers. He never favored the purposes of bigots, or countenanced the pretensions of hypocrites. On the contrary, He stripped them of their disguises, denounced their superstitious observances, and inveighed against their iniquitous perversions of the Scriptures.

The benevolence of Jesus was a trait of His character no less conspicuous. As it was unlike anything

ever conceived before, so it has ever since remained unapproached. Though capable of the strongest personal and private attachments, His affections were as universal as man, and His beneficence an exact expression of them. A benevolence comprehending all nations and times was something entirely new. The founders of previous religions and philosophies had never looked beyond the boundaries of the kingdoms in which they lived. The most venerated teachers of antiquity despaired of elevating the masses of society, or of enfranchising their minds from degrading superstitions. But our Savior, throughout His ministry, made this the principal end of His activities. Nor was His compassion a barren sentiment. It did not evaporate in unavailing sighs and expressions of sympathy, but was practically exercised in rescuing a beloved daughter from the dominion of death, in calling back to life the son of a poor widow, the staff and support of her declining years, in summoning from the very grave a deceased brother, and restoring him alive to his weeping sisters.

Nor was the Savior insensible to the lesser woes and griefs of man. He could pity the sorrows of Bartimeus, poor and blind — the distraction of the lunatic, the grief of the Centurion, whose favorite servant was sick, the maternal anguish of the Syro-Phœnician woman, and the despair of the impotent

man, who, when the water was troubled, had no one to put him into the healing pool. How inimitable, too, the simplicity and pathos with which the evangelists record these touching instances of the compassion of our Lord. Take, for example, that relating to the widow of Nain.

And not long afterward, when persecution had followed Him relentlessly from day to day, when wickedness had employed all its weapons against Him, its pride and cunning, its malice and envy, had accused Him of being a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, a blasphemer and an emissary of Satan,— when His life, passed in bitterness and sorrow, was drawing to its close, and He knew that it would be terminated by an ignominious and cruel death, we see Him standing on an eminence which overlooked Jerusalem, and gazing upon the Holy City, He weeps over it, and with inexpressible tenderness exclaims, "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them who are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

This affecting passage not only reveals the feeling of deep commiseration which our Savior had for His deluded persecutors, but may be cited as illustrative of the dignity of His character, a dignity which is without example or approach in the lives of the most

illustrious of mankind, and is all the more remarkable from the contrast it presents to the lowliness of His outward condition. Other examples of this superhuman dignity of Christ, are furnished by the narrative of His interview with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well, in His conversation with Nicodemus, in the discourse with the Jews about the bread of life, in the consolatory discourse to His disciples, recorded in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of St. John, in His replies to the interrogations of Pilate, and especially, when expiring on the cross, He uttered those remarkable words to the penitent thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Indeed, from first to last, however difficult and trying the situations in which He was placed, our Lord never spoke a word, or performed an action, unworthy of the Son of God.

Whence, then, we ask, had this man this wisdom and these mighty works? What wonder that great David, being a prophet, and so able to foresee and foretell the future greatness of this his greater Son, should call Him "Lord," and declare that His soul should not be kept in hades, nor His flesh see corruption.

CHAPTER IV.

HIS REJECTION BY THE JEWS.

In all history we do not find a nation so completely possessed by an idea, as the Jews were with the expectation of a Messiah, of whose coming into the world Moses and the prophets had spoken, and by whom Israel was to arise and shake off her foreign yoke and heathen rule. She, who then sat solitary among the nations, was in God's good time to become mistress of all, in a far higher sense than the sovereignty which Rome exercised over Judea, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and all lesser Asia.

The Jews' familiarity with Messianic ideas, then, was as great as ours. But their situation differed from ours in this, that the range of their thoughts and sympathies was far narrower. Their only literature had this for its constant theme, in which Messiah was more prominent as the central figure, than the hero of any epic. Not only their canonical, but many of their apocryphal, books were full of it. Their traditions also turned on this point, and their Targums, or commentaries, rivaled the Talmud in references to it. The result was the gradual, but sure growth of a national consciousness of a great

destiny to be unfolded to the eyes of the nations when "the Christ" should come. Add to this the fact that at this particular epoch there was a widespread expectation of His appearing, and we perceive at once with what interest they studied "the signs of the times," and with what eagerness reports were received and circulated which seemed to have any relation to the appearance of the great king, or the nearness of that kingdom, "to which the twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hoped to come." In these words, St. Paul accurately and graphically describes the situation, but then as now, there were important differences among the people, both in respect to their point of view, and the degree of their spiritual enlightenment and consequent ability to apply correctly the prophecies they all professed to receive. How general was the expectation, and how profound the interest, will appear, if we attend to the account of John the Baptist's appearance and ministry. However great his power as a preacher, the multitudes would not have poured into the desert to hear him, unless moved by a common impulse. When we read, therefore, that "Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about" went out to hear him, we know that it was by a common impulse, and that the movement was one of those moral upheavals, of which we have many examples in history, but none equal to this. Nor are we left to

conjecture as to the origin of the movement, or the nature of the impelling force and guiding motive. The explanation appears in the testimony that "all men mused in their hearts whether this was Christ." And that all classes shared the impulse appears, farther, from the fact that the Scribes and Pharisees sent a formal deputation to inquire, "Who art thou?" the thought being the same as when the Baptist asked Jesus, "Art thou He that should come, or look we for another?"

The Baptist declares himself as "a voice crying in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord," whose appearance was near. "I," said he, "baptize you with water unto repentance, but He will baptize you with fire not many days hence." "I must decrease, but He must increase." "He is preferred before me, because He was before me." "He that is from heaven is above all." He is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." Such was the testimony of the Baptist, the earlier and later, until he was cast into prison, when Jesus Himself appeared in the cities and villages of Galilee, and "began to preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

But before we proceed further, let us recall some of the incidents of the Annunciation, and the infancy of Jesus — scenes dear to the great painters, and sacred to all Christians.

Let us note first, the name given Him by the angel,

"JESUS," because "He shall save His people from their sins," the keynote of the four gospels, and all that follows after. Next, we hear the song of the angel, "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." Now appear the heavenly host, singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men, for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." O, what a glorious song to be taken up by the universal choir of Christ's church, and sung through the ages in all lands, and in every tongue, till all shall hear and know the joyful sound.

Immediately follows the visit of the shepherds, significant of the Savior's sympathy with the poor and lowly, and a pledge of the amelioration His religion would effect in their condition. After this come the magi to worship Him who was "born king of the Jews," showing spiritual insight and appreciation of the divine dignity of "the babe of Bethlehem." Still more suggestive is the account of the aged and devout Simeon, to whom "it was revealed that he should not taste of death till he had seen the Lord's Christ." The clearness of his spiritual vision is made evident by his prediction that this child was "set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel," "a sign to be spoken against," and to His mother the warning, "yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own heart, also," adding, "Lord, now lettest Thou

Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." Finally, Anna, the prophetess, coming in, "gave thanks also, and spoke of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Interesting as this account is, as relating to Simeon and Anna, it became more so as indicative of a party in Jerusalem whose hope for the consolation of Israel was based on a deep, spiritual apprehension of the Messiah, His character and mission. That the people and their rulers generally were under the influence of other more material and worldly views, is certain, and easily accounted for by their condition as subject to a foreign yoke. But however signal their failure to understand their own Scriptures, the intensity of their interest in all that concerned the question is everywhere apparent, and nowhere more so than in the narratives of the four Evangelists.

Rejected at Nazareth, Jesus goes to Capernaum, and makes it "His own city." But here, as at Nazareth, the people are not slow to exclaim, "How can this man say, I came down from heaven, seeing we know His father and mother?" Again, at Jerusalem, they sought to parry the force of His miracles by saying, "We know this man, whence He is, but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is,"—substantially the same objection as in Galilee, and both showing how marvelous Messiah's appearing

was to be. And so it was, but in a totally different sense from the Jewish idea of it. Assuming that he was born in Nazareth, they demanded, "Did not the Scriptures say that Christ cometh of the seed of David and from Bethlehem where David was?" Hence the title given our Lord by as many as did believe on Him, or were impressed by His ministry, "Is not this the Son of David?" "Have mercy on me, Thou Son of David," "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, which cometh in the name of the Lord!" The Jews also held that, in some high sense, Messiah was "the son of God," as appears when the High Priest adjured Him, saying, "Tell us whether Thou be Christ, the Son of God?" The humiliation and rejection of this Christ was distinctly predicted, but how completely the Jews had overlooked this feature of the Messianic prophecies, appears from Peter's shrinking from the thought as entirely inadmissible, and worthy of instant condemnation. And when His death became an accomplished fact, he and the other disciples could only speak of Him as He whom they thought was to "redeem Israel."

And so He was a Savior, mighty to save, but not as they looked for salvation. The salvation sought by the Jews of that day was a temporal salvation, a salvation not from the dominion of sin, its guilt and power, but from the dominion of Rome. Christ came

to save, not only the Jews, but Gentiles as well. And He came to save both Jews and Greeks by His death, more than by His life. Therefore He must be lifted up on the cross, before he could draw all men unto Him.

If the proclamation of this truth startled His own disciples, whom He had partly instructed in it, no wonder that it was "a stumbling-block to the Jew and foolishness to the Greek." But the foolishness of God is wiser than men. That which the builders rejected became the Head-stone of the corner, and is now marvelous in our eyes. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of human flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Christ died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. All who come to the Father by Him, are accepted through Him, and in Him. Through His merits they are received and restored to that Divine favor which they had forfeited as sinners. The spirit of adoption is bestowed upon them, by which they cry, Abba, Father. And so they are brought to the heavenly home from which they will stray no more, but forever remain among the number of God's dear children.

In the beautiful words of Jeremy Taylor, "They shall dwell in that blessed country, into which a stranger never enters, and from which a friend never goes away."

CHAPTER V.

HIS REJECTION BY THE JEWS.

THE absolute authority of Christ when he should come, was admitted even by the heretical woman of Samaria. "I know that Messiah cometh who is called Christ; when He cometh, He will tell us all things." Jesus saith unto her, "I that speak unto thee am He." And she believed on Him there, though He was as meek and lowly in His outward appearance, as in heart. Laboring and heavy laden, she came to Him, took His yoke upon her, and found rest to her soul. Not so the Jews. "He came to His own, and His own received him not." Yet a few of them did receive Him, and "to them He gave power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed in His name." Happy were they who saw and believed, and still more blessed are they who have not seen him with their mortal eyes, and yet believe on Him according to the words both of the Lord and of His holy apostle, where He says, "Whom having not seen ye love, and now though ye see Him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Such is the blessedness of believing on Him whom

God hath sent to be "the Savior of the world," whom the apostles both "heard and saw, and handled with their hands, of the Word of Life." This life was manifested to the apostles, and they have shown unto us that "eternal life, which was with the Father," and manifested to the world in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. And all this, that we may have the fellowship with them which, even on earth, they had with the Father and Son. These things they wrote unto us, that with them also we might have fullness of joy, because partakers with them of "the fullness of Christ." If we are "grieved and burdened" with a sense of sin, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." If we pant for a higher and purer life, the promise is to all," "He that hath the Son, hath life." If we remember that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain till now," we learn in the school of Christ that "the creature was subject to vanity not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope, and that it shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Such is the scheme of the gospel displayed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Christ came not to destroy even the old law, but to fulfill it, even as the artist, by unwearied labor, perfects the imperfect sketch he drew at first in outline.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the law shall fail, or of Christ's words pass away. He was indeed "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. But He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." Surely, then, "He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him, when He made His soul an offering for sin; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. Yet He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge, He shall justify many, for He bore their iniquities." In this sublime prophecy, Christ is revealed as the true High Priest, making His one great offering of Himself once for all on the cross, "a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." And all this was in accordance with "the counsel and foreknowledge of God," for in prophecy He is now plainly seen as a "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Here, however, we are confronted with the painful question as to the amazing blindness of the Jews, and their appalling guilt, questions which we can neither fully evade nor explain. Their blindness is

partly explained by the dignity and elevation of the character with which they had to deal, a character which transcended their highest conceptions, and which, therefore, they could not comprehend. His nature, too, was many-sided, and though this was precisely what the prophets had foretold, the Jews failed to appreciate the drift and scope of their own Scriptures. Their subjection to the Roman empire predisposed them to look for, and desire a temporal deliverance from that yoke, and so a temporal king to deliver them. It was this worldly temper, which more than a natural narrowness of their faculties, blinded them to the multiplied and irrefragable proofs of our Lord's divinity. They would not "have Him to reign over them," because, as a nation, they had ceased to look for such a redemption. This being so, His rejection at first by the people of Nazareth, and finally by the nation, was inevitable. Their failure to comprehend Him in His fullness was pardonable, but their deliberate dislike and defamation alike of His doctrine and discipline, admit of no apology. However far short they had come of comprehending Him and the purpose of His mission, if they had only loved what they could understand of both, they had not had sin. But as it was, the evidence compels us to conclude that they "hated Him without a cause." As at Nazareth, they wondered at His gracious words so long as His discourse was general, so it appears to have been everywhere, and to the last.

But when they felt themselves condemned, instead of receiving the correction and profiting by it, they were "filled with wrath," and sought to destroy Him. And this purpose, gradually formed, gathered strength till it was consummated by nailing Him to the bitter cross. So much for the people of Nazareth, and the whole multitude of the Jews who ultimately crucified Jesus at Jerusalem.

But what is the application of this narrative to the world which now is? Doubtless, it has an application to us, and to all men living. It is nearly two thousand years since that day, and "we do not yet see all things put under Him." Many parts of the earth are yet in darkness, many races of men entirely ignorant of the gospel, while none have received it perfectly, or follow Christ wholly. Why is this? Why this slow progress of the gospel, if it be of God? Precisely because it is of God, and like Him, pure and exalted far above the plane of human thinking and living. The moral standard of the gospel is too high to meet with a ready and general reception. The explanation now is the same as with the Jews. The chief reason, therefore, why men reject the gospel in all ages and among all races is, because they are not willing to obey it, and so are not ready to receive it. Nevertheless, from the day of its dawn, it has revealed the true light of the world and life of men, in the person and life of Christ. This fact is so far seen and felt, where the gospel is published,

that men cannot wholly ignore or reject it. There is everywhere a feeling that the true human ideal is seen in the life and character of Christ; that His doctrine is divine, and His gospel of God. Here is a religion which presents to men an ideal excellence of character and purity of life which they never reach, but which nevertheless (and perhaps for this very reason), they are persuaded, is God's unspeakable gift to mankind. And this is a persuasion that grows stronger daily, and is becoming each year more widely diffused. But whereunto will it grow? Will it become the religion of the world? Beyond a doubt, and it has already overcome its greatest difficulties. The Jews thought they had put it to death when they crucified Christ, and pagans persecuted it by fire and sword into the possession of the Roman empire. Then the form in which it was received, as the religion of the empire by Constantine, and for ages afterward, was not primitive nor the purest. How could it be, seeing that thenceforth many European races submitted to baptism at the point of the sword, and Christian nations were born in a day? But the divinity of the gospel shows itself in nothing more than in its power to clear itself of surrounding corruptions, and to purify alike the individual heart and the communal life. It will always be the glory of Christianity to be superior to its most devoted adherents, who can never fully rise to the height of its great argument.

CHAPTER VI.

PHASES OF FAITH.

The whole of Christendom is greater than any of its parts, considered denominationally, chronologically, or geographically. And as no finite mind has ever been able to measure the gospel, it is equally true that each sincere disciple receives a portion of its fullness, and perhaps in most cases the very portion best adapted to him, since each is attracted by that aspect of it which most deeply affects him. Even the apostles dwell upon different aspects of the gospel, and partly, no doubt, because of a different inward bent. In St. Paul's epistles, faith is the most prominent thought; in St. John, it is love; in St. James, duty, or doing, or works. And ever since their day, these fundamental principles have relatively attracted different minds, and have been combined in different proportions. Ardent, enthusiastic, aggressive natures demand active measures and missionary operations, for they are impatient to see the kingdom of God come with power. Meditative minds delight to dwell on and in the love of God, while by the followers of St. James, the Sermon on the Mount is regarded as the substance of the gospel. Of

course the whole truth includes all these phases, but individual men are too narrow to embrace them all and equally in their sympathies at the same time. This fact is indisputable, and goes far to explain the divisions which have sprung up more or less in every age. They began in the apostolic age and churches, and they have continued to the present time. The outward pressure of persecution kept most Christians in one visible communion for a time, and after that, the terrors of church discipline, which now are but seldom exercised and little regarded in free and intelligent communities. Consequently, all are at liberty to follow their prevailing bent, and most men do, at least in the long run. Hence, uniformity is no longer possible. It is a thing of the past, and foreign to the genius of the present age, and especially of American institutions and habits of thought.

But though uniformity is neither practicable nor desirable, unanimity is both. We can all be of one mind in the household of God. We can all contend for the common faith, and do much to promote the common salvation. The real question for each Christian and each church is the same now as in the synagogue of Nazareth. And this is it, are we "offended in Him" by anything in which He differs from our old opinions, jars on our prepossessions, or wounds our self love? If, rising superior to these, we receive His testimony as true, we shall "follow on to know

the Lord." And though at first we know Him, as the very apostles did, only "after the flesh," as "Jesus of Nazareth," "the son of Joseph, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write," yet abiding with Him we shall come with Peter to confess Him not only as "the Christ," but as "the Son of the living God."

This is perhaps the usual, though by no means invariable, order. Certain it is, that the leaven of the gospel has generally, from the beginning, worked in this way; and it will so work till the whole lump is leavened. The seed, seemingly the least of all, has sprung up and borne fruit — some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold. Already it has become the "greatest among herbs," and will yet fill this world, into which the Son of God came to set up "the kingdom of heaven." With His victory over death and the grave, that kingdom began to take form, of whose extent and duration no limit can be assigned. Future ages will as much surpass ours as ours does the earlier and ruder. Of old, God "provided better things" for the Jews than for the Gentile nations; yet from the first, Christ was ordained to be "a light to enlighten the Gentiles." In due time the Gentiles came "to His light and the brightness of His rising," "and in Him they did trust." Again, for us God has provided "better things" than for our pagan ancestors, even as He

will provide better things yet for those who come after us. But as they "without us could not be made perfect," no more could we have attained to what we have, and are, without the ages that have gone before. All ages are bound together, and no age can say of another, "I have no need of thee." No more can any church claim to be the only and exclusive representative of gospel truth, or repository of God's grace. The different branches of Christ's true church can and do, more or less, work together for the truth, and none can hinder it successfully or long. As no one man is capable of completely comprehending Christ in "His fullness," so no one branch of His church has ever fully represented it so as to leave nothing for others to do.

Let no man deceive himself in this matter. For there is "a fullness in Christ" which exceeds all church symbols and standards. All Christians receive "of this fullness," but none do or can receive it all. If I were speaking of Peter, John or Paul, we would have no difficulty in understanding what manner of men they severally were. For, great as they were, they are not beyond human standards of comparison, and it is possible for us to compass them. The same is true of the prophets of the Old Testament, from the least to the greatest. But it is far otherwise when Christ is the theme of our discourse or thought. His greatness transcends all human

measures. He is "the Sun of righteousness," shining in the splendor of His course, without a rival or kindred body with which we may compare Him, and He shines by His own light, borrowing none.

In the first three gospels, He appears equally as "the Son of Man" and "the Son of God," but in St. John He is "the Incarnate Word of God." To suppose that the evangelists and apostles invented the character is to multiply the difficulty four and even twelve fold, for such a hypothesis requires us to believe that twelve men, all living at the same time, simultaneously create a character to which every divine attribute hath set its seal; a miracle which becomes more marvelous, when we reflect that no man since that day has been able to measure it, that the centuries thus far have but imperfectly comprehended it, and that there is no danger that even the most distant future will exhaust it. For it is not conceivable that the moral progress of the world will ever rise to "the fulness of the stature of Christ." However real and great the progress, there will always remain a distance which cannot be removed, heights insurmountable, depths unfathomable. For what is true of "the love of Christ," is equally so of His character as a whole. This being so, let no individual man, or single branch of the church, claim to have exclusive possession of the key to all the knowledge of Christ, or the virtues which properly

belong to the ideal Christian. The declaration of the apostle is still true, that the best of men "know but in part and prophesy (teach) but in part." But when "that which is perfect is come" (the heavenly state), then shall we see eye to eye, and know even as we are known. Let it suffice that now we are called "the sons of God," and comfort ourselves with the blessed hope that "when He who is our life shall appear, then shall we be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person."

CHAPTER VII.

THE THREE ERAS.

Prevalent ideas respecting church history are often, to say the least, very vague, where they are not quite erroneous. Thus many date all the Christianity in the world of any interest to us, or value to others, from the sixteenth century. That is to say, many regard all between that century and the first as of no account, or positively pernicious. But this is a dangerous as well as prejudiced opinion. Christianity is a religion founded on facts. It is, and ever must be, essentially an historical religion, one that can be traced through all the centuries of its history back to its acknowledged first teacher and founder.

I propose to divide this history into periods or clearly defined eras, exhibiting the salient features of each, nothing extenuating, setting down nothing in malice, but presenting the truth in love. I shall confine myself almost wholly to indisputable points, and shall be careful to contend only for the truth, quite willing that others shall draw their own conclusion as to ceremonial laws and doubtful disputations.

For the sake of convenient handling, and with due

regard to the actual order of events, we designate the several periods of church history as the Primitive, the Papal and the Protestant. The first third of this history we call the Primitive period or era, of six hundred years, — an era of boundless activity, rapid growth, great events, and crowned with marvelous success. But even this Primitive era must be subdivided into three lesser eras, each of which has marked characteristics. We will call the first the apostolic, the second, that of the earlier, and the third, that of the later fathers.

THE PRIMITIVE PERIOD.

The age of the apostles is happily well known to Protestants, and no labor is spared to make it familiar. And it is with good reason that our guides dwell on this chapter of church history, for no subsequent age has equaled it in inspiration, authority, activity, or success. But it does not follow that subsequent ages should be ignored, or summarily dismissed with a wave of the hand, intended to bar out all further consideration of their claims to respectful attention. The apostles of Christ preached the gospel and founded churches in the principal cities of the Roman empire, and by their successors Christianity was carried to the remotest parts. Though often assailed from various quarters, the infant church was unmolested by the civil power, till the reign of Nero, A.D.

64. After Nero's persecution, the church had rest till A.D. 94, under Domitian. The persecutions down to Constantine are generally reckoned as ten; too large a number, if general persecutions are meant, too small, if only local ones are included.

The conversion of Constantine, A.D. 312, and the Council of Nicea, A.D. 325, introduced practically a new era, though we shall call it the third division of the Primitive Age of the Church. It belongs properly to the Primitive period because there was not a conscious or visible departure from the principles of the apostolic church, but on the contrary, a sincere and strong purpose to adhere to those principles. The task proposed to itself by the Nicene Council, was precisely this, to ascertain and formulate in a symbolic creed, the faith of the churches acknowledged to be apostolic, *i.e.*, churches that were founded by the apostles, and known to be warmly attached to the doctrines derived from the teachings of the apostles.

THE PAPAL PERIOD.

The second era, which we shall call the Papal era, began with the assumptions of superior authority and dignity, first formally made by Pope Leo, A.D. 440, and continued by Gregory, A.D. 590, and his successors. The seeds of the papacy were sown broadcast all along, from the date of Constantine's conversion, but the ripe fruit did not appear till the

new Constantine (Charlemagne) was by the Pope crowned emperor of the west. This was in the year A.D. 800, from which date till the opening of the sixteenth century, the papacy proper dominated not only the church, but the world.

THE PROTESTANT PERIOD.

With the sixteenth century, the middle or dark ages depart, and the modern or Protestant period begins. Like the Papal period, however, the Protestant had had a dawn which preceded and heralded the day. Wickliff, in the fourteenth century, was the morning star of the new day; and in the fifteenth, John Huss began to scatter the darkness that had long enveloped the continent through the long night of the middle ages. The darkness of those ages was deepest in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries. The twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth showed signs of a new order to spring from the old, and the fifteenth century was an age of transition, when the art of printing was invented, and the love of literature was rekindled in the centers of learning. We draw the dividing line in the dark ages at the beginning of the eleventh century, because the lowest point had been touched before that time, and from that date the lights of modern civilization began to appear and gradually dissipate the dense darkness that had so long prevailed.

Finally, the Protestant period, like its predecessor, is clearly divisible into two parts, viz., the era of dogma, and the era of life, institutions and missionary activity. In the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Protestantism was intensely dogmatic and deplorably narrow in its aims. Humanly speaking, this was perhaps inevitable, but it is a fact to be deplored none the less. If the truth of this statement is doubted by the reader, let him suspend his judgment till the evidence is adduced in the proper place and order.

The earlier fathers of the Protestant reformation did a grand work, but the later fathers thereof failed to carry out what was so well begun, but only half done.

With the nineteenth century, begins the second division of the Protestant period, the age of Bible societies, of missions to the heathen, of concerted and co-operative effort in every department of Christian work and worship. This age has already disclosed its own weak points, and will yet discover others, but on the whole, Christianity, as Christ taught and meant it, is probably better understood. and more widely diffused, and more efficiently applied than ever before.

RECAPITULATION.

To recapitulate — There are, in all, three well defined epochs in the history of Christianity, and three

corresponding eras of the church, viz., the Primitive, the Papal and the Protestant. These eras are strikingly different each from the other. Each has a family likeness, a life and discipline peculiarly its own, and which clearly separates it from both the others. Nevertheless, there are as few sharp corners in religion, as in nature, or in the several phases of social and political life. There are stages and ages in each quite unlike those that went before, as well as those that follow; but each has its preparatory stages. No one appears before us full grown and in perfect panoply, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. Even the apostolic church does not, and much less the mediæval, or the modern. The story of Minerva is fable. The story of the Christian church is history.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRIMITIVE PERIOD.—THE AGE OF THE APOSTLES.—ST. PAUL.

St. Paul was a typical apostle, and perhaps the best representative of the entire band, accepted as such by nearly all Protestants. I propose, therefore, in this chapter to speak of him at large, rather than of the others, for the reason that he is properly placed *primus inter pares*. He was, indeed, the greatest of the apostles, for in him were assembled and collectively shown forth the gifts and graces which their common Master committed severally to the others. Thus he was as just and pious as James, as honest, ardent, outspoken and frank as Peter, loving as John, modest as Matthew, zealous as Andrew, obedient as Philip, cautious as Thomas, and as devoted to the common salvation as Jude. But after his conversion he became entirely free from the exclusive Jewish sympathies which continued to influence St. James, as well as from the national narrowness and party spirit above which St. Peter did not always rise.

The names of Polycarp, Ignatius, Cyprian, Ambrose, St. Augustine, Gregory, Origen, Athanasius,

Chrysostom, recall at once the image and writings of men in the primitive church who were as incomparable in the "gifts" they received from God, as in the services which they were enabled to render. Each of these men was fitted for some peculiar service.

If the mission of St. Paul is one of unequaled dignity, it is no less encompassed by dangers and environed by difficulties. The apostle is to go hence to the Gentiles, to pass from city to city, and from continent to continent. He is to encounter Jew and Greek, Scythian and barbarian, bond and free. He is to disciple the citizens of Antioch, of Athens, of Corinth, of Ephesus, of Rome. He is to enlighten the ignorant, convince gainsayers, dispute with philosophers, give audience to kings. The great, the powerful, the learned, the rich, the poor, the proud, the prosperous, the despairing, he is the minister of all these, and whatever other classes could possibly confront him in his perilous journeyings. And these journeyings — how frequent, how long, how perilous! How singular his sufferings! How great his labors! How glorious his success!

What a combination of gifts, of graces, and of attainments, does this man's career exhibit! A Jewish education, Greek culture, Roman citizenship, much learning, quick perceptions, hearty sympathies, a spirit of self sacrifice, a love of labor, a contempt of danger, a desire to do good, zeal according to

knowledge, compassion for the weak and erring, the deepest solicitude for the salvation of men.

St. Paul was a religious man, before he became a Christian man. He was of Jewish parentage, by whom he was carefully educated in the Jewish religion, in which he profited more than his equals, *i.e.*, his contemporaries. Here, then, the interesting inquiry arises as to the change his character underwent, if any, at his conversion. Excepting a change of faiths and of masters, substituting Jesus of Nazareth for Gamaliel of Jerusalem, was he not, after all, essentially the same man? No, we reply. And others must admit this, who will compare the fiery persecutor of the Christians with the earnest advocate of the faith he had sought to destroy.

Before his conversion, he was narrow, prejudiced, violent, cruel. Being exceedingly mad against the followers of the Nazarene, he sought them out, and haled both men and women to prison. Armed with letters of introduction, and commissioned by the high priest, he quitted Jerusalem for Damascus, with the express purpose of persecuting to the death such disciples as he should find in that remote region. Contrast with this ferocious temper, the love which led him to exclaim that he would willingly be accursed with Christ for the sake of his brethren according to the flesh.

He was remarkable for activity and zeal to the last,

but now beneficent and full of good fruits. How wide as well as warm were his sympathies, not only for the Jews, but for the Gentiles, whom he served, and for whom he willingly sacrificed his popularity, his ease and liberty, and finally his life.

He was the first to seize upon and apply the declaration of Jesus, that not only in Jerusalem, but everywhere, men must worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for God is not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles as well. St. Paul was the first man to break down, at every risk to himself, the exclusive pretensions of the Jews, his own countrymen, and to insist on the perfect equality of the Gentiles with them,— the first to proclaim the fatherhood of God, and the common brotherhood of mankind, without distinction of race, color, or previous condition.

Religion, before his day, the world over, had been an affair of rites, ceremonies and priestly exactions and oppressions. He made ceaseless warfare on all these superstitious dogmas, and preached to all men a religion of reason, faith and love. Trust in God, or faith, was, according to Paul, the beginning of the religious life, hope the first fruit, and love the never-failing issue — love, without which all knowledge and all faith, even, are both vain, and we ourselves sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.

All this sounds familiar enough now, and seems very easy, both to teach and to learn, but in the

apostle's time nothing was harder, or farther from the conceptions of mankind. The Christian conception was an entirely new departure, giving us a new type of manliness, generically superior to the old pagan type. This is certainly true, and to Paul's greatness of soul and incomparable services, we owe its introduction and practical adoption more than to all other human causes.

This estimate is based on the fact that man is essentially, always, and everywhere, a religious being — that the religious sentiment is the deepest of his nature, and yet that before the introduction of Christianity, as Paul preached it, the religious sentiment was everywhere perverted and degraded into a miserable superstition. Paul was the first to divest religion of the husks which had incrusted it, and to remove the rubbish by which its great truths were concealed from view. The warmth of his love and the breadth of his sympathies far exceeded all known examples among men, with the single exception of Jesus, with whom we decline to compare Paul, or any mere man, believing Jesus to be the manifestation of the Highest — the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person.

Most men will make the same confession as did Napoleon at St. Helena, viz.: that Jesus is the one and only personality in history they cannot understand. He is apart from all others. But St. Paul

was a man of like passions with ourselves, a man after our own hearts, whom we can understand, and with whom we can entirely sympathize, because he was intensely human. Strange that such a man should ever have been claimed by bigots and persecutors, or, for a moment, been conceded to such, by liberal and noble minds.

After all, it is true of Paul, as of Cicero and many other celebrated men, that he is best known to us by his letters. Of these, there are thirteen received as such, the most characteristic and important of which are the epistles to the Romans and Galatians, and the two epistles to the Corinthians. These four are undisputed, and from them we learn more of Paul, his manner of life and doctrine than from any and all other sources. In these letters, Paul's great soul shines out like the sun, shedding both light and warmth on all the great problems of ethics and religion, their relations to God and the whole race of mankind. If we compare these letters with other celebrated and classical epistles, elegance of style is the only feature in which they are found inferior to any, while in all the higher qualities they excel all others.

No better judge of literature has lived in our century than Coleridge; and Coleridge pronounces Paul's epistle to the Romans, considered merely as a human production, the grandest effort of the human mind'

the profoundest intellectual work in the world. So much for the apostle's intellectual status. But beyond even his mental force was the greatness of his heart, as evinced in many passages of his letters and in his life.

Witness his letter to Philemon, his address to the elders of Ephesus, and his passionate declaration that he could wish himself accursed from Christ — devoted as a sacrifice like his Master — so that Israel might receive the true righteousness of God by faith, rather than rely on the false righteousness of ceremonial observances.

Finally, St. Paul excelled all others as being equally eminent as a man of thought and a man of action,— a twofold greatness which we scarcely find in any other. Most men are eminent in only one of these directions, but it was the grand distinction of St. Paul to combine them, and so to exert an influence on the world which is without a parallel, having successfully presented in the ablest manner, the most important subject that can engage the human mind.

No doubt Paul had his limitations, defects and positive faults of character. His temperament may have been of undue warmth for perfect symmetry, and his tenacity of purpose was never surpassed. He owed nothing to his personal appearance, his eyes were weak and his bodily presence was feeble, As an orator measured by the Greek standard, the

action on which they laid so much stress, was wanting, but his letters were, and ever will be, mighty to the pulling down the strongholds of sin and superstitious rites, which enslave mankind only to make them twofold more the sons of perdition than they were before, or would have been without them.

But perhaps the most commendable feature of St. Paul's career was the edifying nature of his teachings. If he with a firm hand pulled down and leveled to the dust many ancient and hoary superstitions, he was justified, first, by the fact of their pernicious influence, and secondly by the still more decisive consideration that he had something to put in their place which could not fail to elevate mankind to a far higher plane than they had ever before reached, and put them on the path of endless improvement. This is an aspect of his life and character not to be overlooked, and which should be carefully studied by all who are persuaded that they have a mission to turn mankind from the old to the new, and the darkness to light.

When Paul went forth from Judea to prosecute the great work of his life, a work which has endured to the present day, Judaism was old, decrepit and ready to vanish away, a sure sign that its end was near. But ere it ceased to live it gave birth to Christianity, a religion which springing from Judaism, was yet essentially different in its spirit, scope and purpose,

— its grand, essential principle being that "God is a Spirit," to be worshipped exclusively, neither in Samaria nor Jerusalem, but everrwhere "in spirit and in truth;" that is to say, in the exercise of our own highest faculties which alone are capable of communion with the Divine, and according to the truth of the Divine nature and character, and not after the rudiments of sects, and much less the ceremonial and burdensome observances imposed by a human mediating priesthood.

To sum up: From this survey, brief as it is, we are warranted in regarding St. Paul as the greatest of the apostles and grandest of mortal men. His conversion was the turning point and the great event of his life. His mission was to preach Christ to the Gentiles, turning them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.

In the prosecution of his work, he made three extensive and perilous missionary journeys, founded numerous churches in Asia, and was the first to introduce the gospel to Europe. He is, therefore, the human founder of the European churches. In all his journeys he preached not himself, but Christ. He expressly declares that he was sent, not to baptize, but to preach, thus exalting the office of the preacher. His success corresponded to the greatness of his exertions and sacrifices. His work on earth has never been duplicated, nor can it ever be. Luther

and Wesley approached him nearest in aim, temper, trials, dangers and dignity of office. More than any-other man, he could say, as the end approached, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRIMITIVE PERIOD.— AGE OF PAGAN PERSECUTIONS.

The second division of this era, was the age of the greater and lesser persecutions which, originating with the worthless and tyrannical Nero, in the first century, were continued by the last and best of the Romans, such as Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, in the second century, and consummated by Decius, Valerian, Aurelian and Diocletian, from the middle of the third century to the twelfth year of the fourth, when the final victory of Constantine gave to him undisputed empire, and to the church, peace in all her borders. Between Aurelian and Diocletian, too, there was a long interval of rest, much needed and diligently improved by the Christian host.

These persecutions were intended for the destruction of the church, but they proved the means of its salvation in the highest sense. They winnowed the wheat from the chaff, the genuine coin from the counterfeit, the true from the false, and so served to keep the body of Christians pure, free from all foreign and base elements. They were so many fiery furnaces, in which human hearts were tried as silver, and puri-

fied seven times. They were also schools of discipline in which the soldiers of Christ were trained till they were ready to endure hardness, and suffer the loss of all things as witnesses for Christ and the truth of His gospel. Not only men, but delicate women and little children, were "obedient unto death" in its most appalling shapes. This constancy was something entirely new, in the manner and spirit of its manifestation among Christians, and probably did more to arouse attention and carry conviction to their fellow citizens, than all the preaching of those ages. The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. Never did Christians so glorify God and His gospel as in the midst of the fire. And the result was, Christianity continued its conquests in every direction. In the East, the missionaries of that age penetrated into Persia, Parthia, and even India; in the West, they reached *Ultima Thule*, in Britain.

And while missionaries prosecuted these hazardous journeys, apologists, like Justin Martyr and Athenagoras, pressed the claims of Christianity on the imperial philosopher and stoic, Marcus Aurelius, whose reply, to Justin, at least, was an order for his martyrdom, which he immediately suffered. But his place was soon taken by others, nor is there a break in the chain, not one link wanting, from that day to this.

This was also the age of the apostolic fathers, men who had seen the apostles, and whose writings, there-

fore, were of considerable authority. The best known of these writings are the two epistles of Clement to the Corinthians, which resemble those of St. Paul to the same church; the epistle of Barnabas, which is similar in design and scope to the epistle to the Hebrews, though far inferior in execution; the Shepherd of Hermas, a vision of much repute in the second century; the seven epistles of Ignatius, only three of which are undisputed; and the epistle of Polycarp, the celebrated disciple of St. John.

After these, and second to them only, are Hegesippus, the first church historian, who wrote about the middle of the second century; the apologist, Justin Martyr, already mentioned, martyred A.D. 168; Tertullian, who flourished in North Africa A.D. 190-220; Cyprian of Carthage, his pupil and successor in influence, converted A.D. 246, elected bishop, 248, martyred, 258. The authority of Tertullian was seriously impaired by his adoption of Montanism, so called from Montanus of Mysia, who claimed to be a special organ of the Paraclete. Cyprian rejected Montanism, and held him himself aloof from all other fanatical movements of his age and country, but was himself the author of what has since been called high church Episcopacy, regarding the Episcopate as of strict apostolic origin and authority, itself a unit of which each bishop holds an undivided share. (*Episcopatus unus, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur.*)

The first theological school sprang up at Alexandria, of which Pantænus was the probable founder and first teacher, A.D. 180. Clement (of Alexandria) succeeded him (109-210) and Origen Clement. Origen was born of Christian parentage, A.D. 185, became president of the school A.D. 203, when he was only eighteen years of age. He was ordained in 228, and died in 254, aged sixty-nine. He was by far the greatest scholar of his age, and a man of genius, too, with a will of adamant, and a soul of fire. Many were the vicissitudes of his career. He had warm friends, but his life was embittered by the opposition of numerous enemies, inferior men, who were jealous of his superiority, and were necessarily dwarfed by comparison with him.

The Alexandrian school was of the "Broad Church" type, which has had, and always will have, representatives in the church, where thought is free, and theology cultivated as a science. Antioch, also, had its school of theology, more evangelical and conservative of church traditions than that of Alexandria.

Rome, the mistress of the world, was the last of these three metropolitan cities to develop a theory which it borrowed from Carthage, its ancient rival in arts and arms. The least original and aggressive of all the branches of the church in this age, we shall see it in the next period (the Nicene), gradually encroaching upon the rights and liberties of all others,

and ultimately absorbing them, till she becomes the recognized head of the Latin or Western church. Constantinople, and the Greek church generally, stoutly denied her claims then, and have steadily refused to allow them, down to our own time.

There were also heresies in those days, which differed from the commonly received faith in every degree, from the least to the greatest. The Docetae, like some moderns, held that things are not as they seem, *e.g.*, that the incarnation was not real, but only sensible or apparent; the Novatians answered to the Puritans of the English church; the Gnostics to the English and American Unitarians, inasmuch as they were rationalists in principle, and professed to receive Christianity by insight rather than faith, and therefore to discard all that did not harmonize with the deductions of reason, or what they held to be alone reasonable. Manichæism was a dualistic system of Persian origin, a compound of Parsism and Christianity, inculcating the dogma of two rival deities, good and evil, whose kingdoms and subjects are those of light and darkness. The Ebionites and Nazarenes were sects of Jewish Christians, who held to the original Hebrew gospel of St. Matthew, and believed in Jesus as their national Messiah, the last and greatest of the prophets, to be revered and obeyed, but not worshiped.

Thus we see that nearly all our modern divisions

of thought were actually represented even in the primitive and purest age of the church. But when we consider numbers, we must not forget that the great body of believers were of one heart and one mind, professing "the apostles' creed," and continuing in the fellowship of those churches called apostolic, because founded by the apostles, and generally allowed to have perpetuated the apostolic order and transmitted the apostolic faith.

The characteristic feature of the gospel is best brought out by the contrast of its sphere and spirit with that of its proudest and most pretentious rival, the philosophical scheme known as Neo-Platonism. It was the constant boast of the advocates of this philosophy, that only men of pure hearts and lives were initiated into its mysteries, while they alleged that the church was constantly receiving sinners, and was largely made up of artisans, slaves and others from the lowest class of society. The reply of the Christian apologist to the charge was, "We allow it, for Christ came to call, not the righteous, but sinners; but He calls them to repentance and a new life. Thus, we come to Him proud and He makes us humble, ignorant and He enlightens us, foolish and He makes us wise, faithless and He makes us believing, impure and He makes us chaste, rebellious and He makes us obedient, strangers and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and He makes us fellow-

citizens with the saints and of the household of God. Whereas we were formerly without hope, as without God in the world, we now rejoice with unspeakable joy in the precious promises which God has given us in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The membership of the church in this age was indeed comparatively pure. A despised and persecuted sect, has no attractions for the worldly, ambitious, or insincere. The worship was simple, and consisted of Scripture reading and expositions, common prayer and praise, with the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Liturgies were in general use. Baptism was the initiatory rite, universally received, and immersion the form, applied chiefly to adults in the first century, but equally to infants in the second and all subsequent centuries, on the ground of being an apostolic tradition, and in harmony with Christ's institution. Laymen took an active and influential part in church affairs, and from the beginning of authentic church history, we read of three orders in the ministry. No city had more than one bishop, though it might have many presbyters and deacons, and numerous church assemblies and edifices. Thus Ignatius was bishop of Antioch, Polycarp, of Smyrna, Irenæus, of Lyons. A bishop was *primus inter pares* as to the other clergy, but each bishop was officially equal to any other bishop. The bishops of other cities could and did differ from the bishop of Rome,

and disputed with him on perfectly equal terms. The only doctrinal test or symbol was "the Apostles' Creed," the shortest, simplest and surest of all creeds, a return to which would heal most of the modern divisions among Christians.

In brief, this was the heroic age of the church, whose achievements have never been equaled since, and whose illustrious virtues, sacrifices and works constitute an inestimable treasure, the common heritage of Christendom. "God," says Jeremy Taylor, "was to build up Jerusalem. On the one side there was *scandalum crucis;* on the other *patientia sanctorum*, and what was the event? They that had overcome the world could not strangle Christianity. But so have I seen the sun, with a little ray of distant light, challenge all the powers of darkness, and, without violence or noise, climbing up the hill, hath made night so retire that its memory was lost in the joys and spritefulness of the morning. And Christianity, without violence or armies, without resistance and self-preservation, without strength or human eloquence, without challenging of privileges or fighting against tyranny, without alteration of government and scandal of princes, with its humility and meekness, with toleration and patience, with obedience and charity, with praying and dying, did insensibly turn the world into Christian, and persecution into victory."

CHAPTER X.

THE NICENE AGE.

THE darkest hour of the night is the last, and the darkest hour in the history of the Christian church was that which immediately preceded her delivery from the most cruel persecutions which her enemies could devise. From Decius to Diocletian, or the last half of the third century, there was scarcely an interval of repose, and no form of injury which was not inflicted. But when Constantine (A.D. 311) had vanquished his rivals, he openly espoused the cause of the Christians and brought them aid and succor, while he barely tolerated the celebration of heathen rites, which were formally suppressed by Theodosius near the close of the century. Christians emerged from their hiding-places in great numbers, came rapidly to the front, were intrusted with the highest offices and received the highest honors of the empire. This was especially true of the clergy, on whom Constantine bestowed every mark of his favor, inviting them to court, rebuilding their churches on a magnificent scale, and making ample provision for the revenues of a kingdom whose Founder had declared that it was "not of this world."

Apart from the world, opposed to and by it up to this date, henceforth it was to share the vicissitudes of courts and kings. Enjoying the protection of all subsequent emperors, except Julian the apostate, the church soon forgot her former woes in the sunshine of present prosperity. Long used to poverty, she had become suddenly rich. No longer despised and forsaken so that but few of the great and noble were numbered among her children, her courts were now crowded with worshipers. Formerly her congregations were confined to the "upper rooms" of private houses; now they assembled in splendid basilicas, built to last for centuries, adorned with precious stones and enriched with vessels and ornaments of gold and silver. Her ministers, once hunted down and driven into exile, were now received with favor everywhere, and their society highly valued. The effect of this sudden transition on the character of the church, her ministers and members, did not differ from all similar changes among men. It is not in human nature to withstand the injurious influences of such rapid revolutions of fortune. The minds of men, like their eyes, require time to adjust themselves to novel situations, and especially when they suddenly emerge from the dark trials of poverty and persecution into the dazzling light of boundless prosperity.

In many respects, the civil administration and general society underwent most favorable changes.

Barbaric laws were repealed or modified, while the tone of social life was much improved, though by no means wholly purified. The rigors of slavery were gradually abolished, the sentiment of brotherhood was introduced, and the sphere of woman greatly elevated. For the first time, out of Judea, the true ideas of marriage and family life, all that is involved in the dignity and happiness of half the race, were successfully incorporated into the laws of the empire, whence they passed into the legislation and life of all Christian nations. Such was the immediate influence of the church on the civilized world as it then was. But what was the influence of the world on the church? It was reciprocal and perhaps equal. If the tone of society was raised, that of the church was lowered. If outwardly the world became Christian, the church, within and without, became worldly. The clergy grew luxurious, ambitious of worldly distinctions and honors, and often greedy of gain.

Heresies were scented from afar, which gave rise to fiery debates, from which divisions sprang up that rent the church. Of old, it used to be said, "See how these Christians love one another." But in this period, they began to turn their weapons against each other.

In this era, great doctrinal controversies arose, and the general councils were held which settled them. The chief controversies were the Arian, the Pelagian,

the Apollinarian, the Nestorian, the Monothelite, the Monophysite, and the Donatist, controversies touching the divine and human natures of Christ and the operations of grace. The councils were held in Nicæa (325), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (441), and Chalcedon (451). The leading disputants who figured in these controversies and councils, were Athanasius and Arius, Augustine and Pelagius, Cyril and Nestorius, Eusebius, Jerome, Gregory Nazianzen, Eutyches, Chrysostom, Leo, and Gregory called the Great.

The first general council which demands our attention is that of Nicæa (A.D. 325), a council which called together the chief representative men of the church, a venerable and imposing assembly from its numbers (two hundred and fifty), gravity, general worth and dignity of character. They represented the leading churches, more especially those that claimed apostolic descent, and piqued themselves on a scrupulous adherence to the discipline and doctrine they had received from the apostles and the apostolic fathers. This is the chief claim of the council to our consideration, since it was called to determine a fact, viz., what was the true Christian doctrine of Christ's higher nature? His human nature being undisputed in this age, though not in the preceding, as witness the Docetae and Gnostics, what is to be affirmed and believed to be true of His higher nature?

There was a general assent to the dogma which declared it to be divine, but is the divinity of Christ relative or absolute, derived, or original? Here was a fundamental question which, once propounded, could not be evaded. Historically, it originated in this way. Hitherto the whole body of believers had been satisfied with the general confession of faith called "the apostles' creed," which for all the practical purposes of worship was and is the best creed of Christendom. Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, was the first to disturb the general peace of the church, which he did by declaring that the divinity of Christ was not the same as the divinity of the Father, but only similar. As the terms he at first employed were somewhat ambiguous, he had, for a time, the usual courtesy of being unmolested extended to him, because of the doubt as to the precise significance of the distinction he would introduce into Christian teaching. But when Athanasius, a youthful deacon of the same church, drew from him the admission that Christ's existence began in time, it followed that there was a time when He did not exist, and that, instead of being regarded as the Creator of all, He must, therefore, be reduced to the rank of a creature.

This conclusion, following inevitably from the premise of Arius, arrested the attention of the whole church, and was the occasion of so much controversy

as to necessitate the calling of a general council, which assembled at Nicæa, near Constantinople, at the command and under the protection of Constantine. How far, or in what way, the emperor may have sought to influence the decision of the council has been disputed. Constantine was no theologian, and he appears to have allowed due freedom to the delegates of the churches, who, with few exceptions, agreed in their conclusions and united in formulating the symbol since known as "the Nicene creed," or rather that part of it relating to the nature of Christ in His relations to the Father.

The clauses touching the double nature of our Lord, as both divine and human, with two corresponding wills, and a real human nature with a perfect human soul as well as body, were added at the following councils held at Constantinople (A.D. 381), at Ephesus (A.D. 441), and at Chalcedon (A.D. 451), also the clause relating to the Holy Ghost, completing the creed, which has remained unaltered since, save by the addition of the "*filioque*" clause, subsequently made by the Western or Latin church, in opposition to the more Scriptural view of the Greek church, a slight clause, yet sufficient to divide the church by asserting that the Holy Ghost proceeds from "the Father and the Son."

Arius and Athanasius were both men of great talents, and defended their views with as much ability

as any of their successors have done. Arius shared the fate of such, in all ages, as fail to get a footing. He died soon after, and though his party continued for several generations, it gradually dwindled till it disappeared.

Athanasius lived nearly fifty years after the adjournment of the council, and his influence increased in the church in proportion to the persecutions he suffered from Constantine and his sons. He was repeatedly banished from Alexandria, but found faithful friends wherever he went. "*Athanasius contra mundum*," "Athanasius against the world," became one of the watchwords of the church, a talismanic phrase, by which the faithful were often rallied to their duty when driven by persecution from their homes and churches into the wildernesses of the world.

As already implied, there were other controversies relating to the person or nature of Christ, such as the Monophysite and the Monothelite. That is to say, the question arose whether Christ had one or two natures, and it was decided that he had two. Did one will dominate this two-fold nature? No, was the reply. Christ had two wills, a divine, and a human will. He was "very God and very man," and each nature was whole and entire, wanting nothing. But though there are two natures in Christ, His personality is not plural, but single. He has two natures,

but is one person. "Son of God" and "Son of man" as to natures, He is the one historical person whom the church acknowledges as its head, and Christians accept, believe in, and love as their Savior. In the language of that day, the two natures of Christ are not to be confounded, nor His person divided.

All these decisions were made by the general councils, six in all, of which only four are undisputed. The completed Nicene creed taught that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father. That He proceeds also from the Son, was a later addition to the creed, made in the West, which can be defended only by explaining that the procession from the Son is in the sense of "mission" from Him.

Other councils, besides these six, are received as ecumenical by some divisions of the church, but only these are generally so reckoned and their decisions received as conclusive, "because they have most certain warrant of Scripture."

The next controversy that arose was the "Pelagian," so called from Pelagius, a native of Britain, who came to Rome early in the fifth century. There he soon made himself popular, by teaching that mankind did not fall in Adam, and that all have the ability to repent and become Christians without the aid of special grace. Augustine assailed this doctrine as subversive of the whole scheme of Christianity. His refutation of it was accepted by the church as con-

clusive, and the Augustinian doctrine of grace became the standard of orthodoxy, and has continued to hold its place as an integral part of the Christian doctrine of grace along with that of the Nicene conception of Christology.

These controversies settled for ages, if not for all time, the two fundamental truths which together form the basis of a Christian theology, viz. (1) that man is a sinner, unable to save himself by his own unaided efforts; and (2) that God has provided an all-sufficient and meritorious Savior for man in the person of His only begotten Son, who is both able and willing to save to the uttermost "all who come to the Father by Him." These ideas entered into the consciousness of Christians from the first, but they were clearly defined and logically formulated in the age now under consideration.

There were, in this age, other able defenders of the faith besides Athanasius and Augustine. Nestorius, for insisting on calling the virgin "the mother of Christ," instead of "the mother of God" (which had become the popular phrase), was persecuted and banished from his see of Constantinople, and finally condemned as a heretic. Eusebius of Cæsarea accepted the Nicene creed with some reservations and explanations, and so became the leader of a party called "Semi-Arians." But neither Arians nor Semi-Arians, answer to any modern branch of the church.

Though aiming at clearness of conception, and fancying themselves superior to the Athanasians in logical acumen, they exposed themselves to the charge of logical inconsistency, mental confusion, and even contradiction of terms in denying Christ's absolute divinity, and yet conceding that He was a proper object of worship, by whose passion and death we obtain salvation, and that He is omniscient enough to judge the world in that day when all the dead shall hear His voice. While they flattered themselves, and endeavored to persuade others, that they rejected the commonly received doctrine of the church because they saw clearer and farther than others, their survey of the subject was superficial, their comprehension of it partial, and their grasp of it weak.

The orthodox faith found able defenders in Gregory, of Nyssa, and his brother Basil, Gregory, Nazianzen, Chrysostom, of Constantinople, and Jerome, who was a hard student, and devoted many years to the elucidation of the sacred text, and thereby furnished the church with the Latin version of the Scriptures, since known as "the Vulgate," Latin being then the vulgar or common tongue. Jerome, from choice, retired from cities, and passed many years in the seclusion of the deserts and villages of Palestine, where he prosecuted his studies without the distraction of courts, society, and crowds of people.

Chrysostom went to Constantinople near the close of the fourth century, and for ten years fought a good fight, bravely combating the superstitions and sins of the city and court till his lips were closed and his life ended by banishment and torture.

Thus far, we have spoken mainly of the thinkers, theologians and preachers of this period. It behooves us to make honorable mention of the ablest administrators of the Church, more especially of Ambrose of Milan, who flourished in the last quarter of the fourth century. He was a man of clear perceptions, an eloquent preacher, and above all an executive officer of great vigor, who hesitated not to exclude from the communion the Emperor Theodosius, when he had imbrued his hands in innocent blood.

Near the middle of the next century, the fifth, Leo I became bishop of Rome, and continued in that office twenty-one years (A.D. 440–461). He is justly regarded as the founder of the greatness of that see, and he devoted his official life to its aggrandizement. After him, in the sixth century (A.D. 590), came Gregory the Great, who administered the see on the principles of Leo, which he applied more vigorously than any of his predecessors.

In this way, by continued encroachments on other sees and churches, the bishops of Rome constantly increased their own power and the influence of their own Church. The grand scheme of the papacy be-

gan to unfold itself from the time the city was abandoned by Constantine. It requires but little knowledge of human nature to enable us to perceive how easy it must have been for the bishops of the Roman Church to get themselves gradually acknowledged as the successors of the emperors who had virtually vacated the throne and abandoned the empire of the West.

To sum up. This second division of the Primitive period includes the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries. It is remarkable as the age which witnessed the beginning of the union between the Church and the State, which continued unbroken till the sixteenth century. The advantages of the union, to the Church, were worldly and temporal. Little by little the tone of the Church was lowered, her doctrines were corrupted, and her spiritual life extinguished, till she had but a name to live.

Secondly. This was the age of great controversies touching fundamental principles, the issues of which are embodied in the ancient symbols, which will long retain their hold upon the hearts of evangelical Christians.

Thirdly. In this age, the power of Rome as a secular power began to decline, and as the ancient empire began to dissolve, men's hearts failed them for fear of the things which should come upon the earth. Then it was that Augustine, the best representative man of

the period, conceived the idea of *Civitas Dei*, "the city of God," which in the counsels of heaven was destined to supersede the city which had been called "eternal," but was no less subject to decay than other earthly empires. This grand conception of the great theologian was welcomed with enthusiasm by all Christians, and served to reconcile many Romans, not avowedly Christians, to what seemed inevitable even to them. Gradually this sublime vision mastered the thoughts of men till the common mind was possessed with it. In the course of time, the image of it was seriously blurred and disfigured, but it was never wholly lost.

In the mind of Augustine it assumed its highest form when, after his conversion, he revisited the spot where he parted years before from his mother. Meeting her for the last time on earth, they conversed on these high themes, now sacred to them both. Feeling that the end was near for one of them, and the happiness of heaven soon to be entered on, they could but ask themselves what probably it was most like. And the reply came, it is a continuous, unbroken, everlasting ecstasy, such as the soul of the Christian is only occasionally favored with, and which on earth is felt but for a moment, but there, in the Savior's presence, will endure and increase forever and ever.

Within three days from this interview Monica, the

mother, passed into rest, while Augustine girded himself for the work which God had given him to do, a mission second only to that of the apostle whom, in many respects, he resembled, the great "apostle of the Gentiles."

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell, the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE NICENE CREED.

I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. And I believe one Catholic and apostolic church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

NOTE.—"God of God" and "very God" mean the same as the phrase "of one substance with the Father."

CHAPTER XI.

THE PAPAL PERIOD (HILDEBRAND).

From the sixth to the sixteenth century, Europe presented a spectacle, the like of which was never seen before, and will never be seen again. The papal church was the ruling power, not always in the ascendant, but ever vigilant, always active, and everywhere persistent. The shadow of the papacy gradually, but surely, extended in all directions, and fell, not only upon every visible object, but upon the most secret springs of human action. By its sanction kings reigned, and by its fiat an army of priests, monks, friars and nuns encamped on the soil, and held the whole continent for its liege lord, the Pope. Europe was covered with ecclesiastical palaces, universities, churches and cloisters as by a network which inclosed and held fast every living thing.

We have seen what changes were wrought in the condition and character of the Church by the conversion of Constantine and the consequent establishment of Christianity as the religion of the state. As this establishment led to riches and honors, so these in their turn paved the way for other changes, some for good and others for evil.

In the great cities, especially, the corruptions of society disgusted many devout souls who withdrew from the world and became monks, shutting themselves up in monasteries, or in the caves of the earth. These monasteries differed from each other as much as the men who formed or signed their monastic or canonical rules. By such as were men of action and panting for adventures connected with associate missions, the gospel was carried into France in the fifth century, into England in the sixth, into Germany in the seventh and eighth, and into Scandinavia and Russia still later. Others tilled the soil and reclaimed the land from swamps and forests. But this original spirit of self-denial and early activity declined. The love of learning succeeded to the love of labor, and a love of ease and luxurious living, to both. But corrupt as many of the monasteries became, there is no doubt that their corruptions were often greatly exaggerated by those who expected to be, and finally were, enriched by their suppression.

What has been said of monasticism, in its various forms, will apply to the papacy. It grew up and prevailed as monasticism did. The times were full of perils, without and within. Without, was the false prophet rapidly advancing on Christendom from the East, and threatening to overthrow it. Within, secular princes were following the example of the Byzan-

tine emperors, and seeking to subject the Church to the vicissitudes of their own policy.

Such were the causes which incited the clergy to insure their independence by uniting under a common spiritual chief or head. As always happens, when the time had come and affairs were ripe, the man appeared who organized and applied all the loose floating sentiments and aspirations of the age. That man was Hildebrand, commonly called Gregory VII. Born in Italy, he was educated at Clugny, and became a Benedictine monk. Even while a deacon his influence was greater than that of any contemporary. Elected Pope, he enforced his views on all. His bitter feud and long war with Henry IV, emperor of Germany, ended in bringing that prince to Canossa in the guise of a penitent. Afterward, Gregory was driven from Rome by Henry, and died in exile, yet his spirit and ecclesiastical system survived him for centuries, and still live, though animated with less vigor. Hildebrand was the embodiment of the mediæval spirit, which reached its highest point when Henry, clothed in his penitential garb, humbled himself before the Pope. It was in the depth of the coldest winter in the memory of man. The ground was covered with snow ; but colder than nature was the heart of Hildebrand. For three days he compelled the penitent prince to expose his bare head and feet to the wintry blasts, and condescended to

admit him, at last, only at the earnest prayer of the Countess Matilda, by whose protection he was himself sheltered from his enemies.

"A man's foes shall be those of his own household." Hildebrand's experience furnished no exception to this rule. Henry was a rebellious son, whom he chastised for his own good and the contentment of his subjects, many of whom had rebelled against his tyrannical exercise of power, and so gave Gregory his grand opportunity to humble the emperor, and with him the imperial power, while he exalted himself and the pretensions and prerogatives of the papacy. The fruits of this vigorous policy remain even to our own day, and are visible in every national church which still wears the papal yoke.

To carry out his plans and perfect the scheme which he had formed in his own mind, it was necessary to regulate the clergy, and restore order to the Church in all her borders. Bishops must be taught to regard the Pope as the head of their order — *fons et origo* — the fountain head and source of all their authority and jurisdiction. Princes must yield the right of investiture, or canonical instalment of the bishops to the Pope, as well as the previous prerogative of appointment. All orders of the clergy must be made to relinquish matrimony, as a state too worldly for their calling. The claims of the Church could not be adequately responded to without the

sacrifice of this and every other earthly tie. Their reward was to be sought in the subjection of men's minds to the dominion of the Church, and in the enjoyment of ample revenues and estates, held as corporate property, transmissible to each succeeding generation. But even this inducement was insufficient, and would have failed to enlist the enthusiasm of the priesthood, had it not been seconded by the untiring energy and unconquerable will of Hildebrand. This iron will, guided by a clear conception of the drift both of the age in which he lived and the Church which he governed, enabled him to succeed where his less resolute predecessors had failed. The result was, that we shall search history in vain for a parallel of the career of this remarkable man. It is true that all things conspired in his favor. "The stars in their courses" fought for Gregory. The vices of the emperor, the superstition of the people, the irregularities of the clergy, the aspirations of the faithful, the fanaticism of the monks, the divisions of Italy, the rivalry of princes, the ambitions of priests, — all these and many other forces contributed to the establishment of papal rule as the source and necessary sanction of all other rule in Church and State. The Pope was generally regarded as that "spiritual man" whom the apostle describes as judging all, but himself judged of none. The claim of infallibility for the Pope had been cautiously advanced before,

but from this time it was urged openly, though it never received the formal sanction of a council calling itself general, till our day (1870).

Among the fables invented to prop up the power of the popes, we must reckon the pretended "Donation of Constantine" to Pope Sylvester, according to which, the emperor gave Italy and Rome to this Pope and his successors. Having done this, he retired from Italy, and transferred the capital of civil government to Constantinople. "The Decretals of Isidore" defined the rights of the Church and clergy, carrying the power of the popes to unprecedented heights. These were both barefaced inventions of the ninth century, and could impose on none but the dark ages. They have long since been abandoned, even by Roman Catholic historians, some of whom, however, apologize for them as harmonizing with the sentiments of the mediæval church, and so were acquiesced in by all Europe.

In point of fact, the emperors appointed civil governors of Rome as late as the middle of the eighth century, and Charlemagne was there crowned emperor of the West, on Christmas day, A.D. 800. The grandfather of this great prince, Charles Martel, had, in the great battle of Poictiers (A.D. 732), arrested the progress of Mohammedanism, which then threatened all Europe. His father, Pepin, had also served the cause of the Church as then understood, while

Charlemagne himself, descending into Italy, rescued the popes from the hands of their enemies, the Lombards, and was crowned emperor as a reward for his devotion to the Roman see, and in recognition of his sovereignty as successor to all the imperial powers ever possessed by the greatest of the old emperors.

On the whole, Hildebrand must be pronounced, not only the greatest of the popes, but the greatest man of the middle ages. Charlemagne alone can be compared with him, but even Charlemagne falls far below the man who, though dying in exile, lived long enough to execute all his plans, which, in turn, were to prove as enduring as they were radical and far-reaching.

Hildebrand, then, is to be regarded as the real founder of the papacy and that ecclesiastical system which is identified with the papacy. But as there were heroes before Agamemnon, so there were popes and able popes before Gregory VII, Such were Leo, and Gregory, called the Great, of the fifth and sixth centuries respectively. They prepared the way by grading the ground and getting together the material, but it was reserved for Hildebrand to build the spiritual temple which finds its visible expression and counterpart in the grandest of ecclesiastical structures, which had Bramante and Michael Angelo for its architects, and the wealth of Europe to furnish its precious stones and inlay its altars with gold. All

things considered, the papal church, as Hildebrand fashioned it, must be looked upon as the most complete and comprehensive scheme ever devised for subjugating the human mind, and perpetuating its own dominion where it has once been acquired. The hierarchy of which Gregory's successors are ever the head is a corporation so powerful that God's truth, as plainly declared in the gospel, can alone overthrow it. Human reason, unaided by revealed truth, has thus far uniformly failed in its efforts to burst the bonds which this hierarchy imposes upon it.

But "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," is mightier than the mightiest of the sons of men, and has "pierced to the quick" this giant of the middle ages, made vainglorious by his successful resistance to all other adversaries. Even stones from "Siloa's brook" have been slung at him with deadly effect by those whom he has disdained as mere babes and striplings, and threatened to give as prey to the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air.

It is also pertinent to remark in this connection, that the first formal and authoritative condemnation of the people's reading the Scriptures in their own tongue was pronounced by Hildebrand, in the case of the Sclaves, who solicited this boon in the eleventh century. Doubtless the Pope felt, instinctively, that this privilege, if granted, would prove fatal to the perpetuity of the system with which his

name and pontificate were indissolubly connected. If so, the event justified his fears as well grounded; for as soon as the Bible was circulated in a language understood by the people, they began to pull down the Church which claimed to be under the special sanction of St. Peter and secured to his successors. Account for it as one may, the fact is patent and undeniable that the diffusion of the Scriptures destroys this work of human hands by disclosing "the only foundation which God has laid," and declaring the name of Jesus as "the only name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved."

CHAPTER XII.

THE PAPAL PERIOD. (INNOCENT III, BONIFACE VIII, JULIUS II).

THE principles of Hildebrand (Gregory VII) were professed, and his policy adhered to, by all the popes who succeeded him, but by none with so much resolution, ability and consistency as by Innocent III, Boniface VIII, and Julius II. These three popes were the most illustrious of Hildebrand's successors. They shared his views, partook of his temper, and had the same fixed purpose of exalting the papal power above all others. All three were men of great ability, and were endowed with the heroic qualities which made the old Romans masters of the world. Innocent III was inferior to Hildebrand only. He surpassed all others in those talents which insure success in the born rulers of men. Advanced to the papacy while yet in the vigor of early manhood (A.D. 1198), he exercised absolute power with almost uniform success, for eighteen years (till 1216). Throughout his reign he pursued a far-reaching policy, displayed boundless ambition, and was unscrupulous in the use of means. His first efforts were directed to the expulsion of foreigners from Italy, and to secure

the union of the peninsula under his own sway. After this he proceeded to reduce emperors and kings to a condition of vassalage to himself, and also to his successors, if they should possess the nerve requisite to enforce his principles.

Frederic II of Germany was Innocent's most difficult subject, but, by encouraging his rivals, the Pope succeeded in controlling him, and making him subservient to the papal policy.

Philip Augustus of France was proud and headstrong, but Innocent put the bit in his mouth, and curbed him completely by taking the part of his wife, who had been unjustly divorced.

Sancho I of Portugal braved the Pope's pretentions for a little while, but was soon glad to receive his pardon, and be restored to his favor, on condition of confessing that he held his kingly power from the Pope and from no other.

King John, the contemporary English king (A.D. 1207), had an experience more bitter and humiliating than any of his royal brothers. A disputed election gave Innocent the opportunity (for which the popes were ever on the alert) to interfere in the selection of an archbishop for the see of Canterbury. His influence with the canons secured the appointment of Stephen Langton, a man admirably qualified for the office. The fact that he was so, proved a sufficient reason to prejudice the king against him. Inno-

cent at once deposed him from his kingly office, and thrust him aside ignominiously (A.D. 1209). Then it was that the king behaved as basely as before he had haughtily. Humbling himself in the dust, he consented to receive his kingdom back as a fief of the papacy (A.D. 1213). But this was more than the nobles of England could stand. Their English phlegm was fairly aroused, and they soon extorted Magna Charta (the great charter) from their pusillanimous king, and thus was laid the foundation of the liberties of the realm. The Pope endeavored to coerce the will of the nobles, but in vain.

In England, then, Innocent received his first check, and this was the beginning of a resistance to papal pretentions which has not yet culminated. Seeing his end near, Innocent called a council (the fourth Lateran), in which measures were taken to hold and extend the advantage acquired by this great Pope.

In A. D. 1294, nearly a century after the accession of Innocent, Boniface VIII, a man of kindred temper, became Pope, and made a strenuous effort to revive the good old times of Gregory VII, and of Innocent III, but it was too late. There was no want of talent or of vigor, but times had changed. The lapse of a century disclosed the elements of a new world, a new order of things. The Pope made war upon another Philip, but this time the French nobles and people sided with the king and not with the Pope. The king

was indeed thrice armed, because his quarrel was just. But it is probable the result would have been the same in any case, for it was determined mainly by the new spirit of nationality which was beginning to animate all the nations of Europe.

Boniface laid France under an interdict, as Innocent had England in the days of King John, but with far different results. The Pope himself fell before the wrath of the French, and after submitting to the ignominy of imprisonment, he died of a broken heart, Oct. 11, A. D. 1303. Yet Boniface was one of the greatest of the popes, a true son and worthy successor of Hildebrand, but he was born too late in the world's history to enable him to do what both Gregory VIII and Innocent III had done, not only with impunity, but with almost perfect success.

The last great pope was Julius II, who came to the papacy just two hundred years after the death of Boniface (A. D. 1503). A Genoese by birth, he was of an open but irascible temper, which was further tried and embittered by the difficulties of his position and the evil days on which he had fallen. The papacy had been reduced to its lowest state by the crimes of his predecessor, Alexander VI, whose son, Cæsar Borgia, was the moral monstrosity of the age, the shame of Europe, of Italy, and above all of the Pope himself, who was destined to die of poison, prepared by the hand of his own son. Julius was a very

different man from the Borgias, father and son. His ruling passion was to drive the foreigner from Italy. He was the soul of the League of Cambray, formed against Venice, then the haughtiest of republics, and he afterward, by the aid of other powers, expelled the French from Italy. He was, however, too old to continue this warfare, and died (A. D. 1513) after holding the reins of power ten years, at a time when he was meditating great things for what he doubtless believed the interests of Italy and the Church of which he was the appointed head, albeit he was an ambitious statesman of high calibre, and a doughty warrior.

Julius was succeeded by Leo X of the house of Medici, a man of learning, refinement, and easy temper. He was, however, wholly unfitted to carry out the plans of Julius II, or to check the rising spirit of reform which was soon to show itself in overwhelming force, bursting all the bands by which it had been controlled down to that age.

Infantile Europe had grown to manhood, and could no longer be held by the old leading strings. Even the papal interdict, in its most awful form, now failed of its object, which was to move a people to rebel against their prince when his resistance to papal demands deprived them of their most valued religious privileges. This was indeed a fearful weapon of the popes, and they often employed it with fatal effect.

When milder measures had failed, the interdict followed, which closed the churches and silenced the clergy. All through the land, the church bells ceased to be heard, the organ no longer led the devotions of the people, the altar was deserted on which the priests professed to offer a full and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the penitent, the doors of the church were shut, and a solemn stillness reigned where of old multitudes resorted at almost daily festivals, instituted for the edification of the faithful. Baptism and burial were the only rites permitted, and these were performed under circumstances adapted and intended to spread far and wide a feeling of discontent and determination to seek reconciliation with Rome at any price.

If this seems strange, we must remember that throughout Europe, the belief was held that without the Church as then constituted, with the Pope as its infallible head, there was, and could be, no salvation. The rites and ceremonies of the Church must be adminstered by a priesthood possessed of "the power of the keys," which they held from St. Peter through the Pope of Rome. Communion with and submission to the bishop and Church of Rome was deemed essential to the validity of sacred functions, which would lose all their efficacy, directly they failed to receive the sanction of the Pope. Hence the power of the papal interdict, which for ages hung over the nations

of Europe as a black cloud, and often fell on them with all the terror of a thunderbolt.

Such was the spiritual thraldom of the European peoples in the middle ages, a condition of things rendered possible only by the thick darkness in which not only the masses, but the nobility and even the clergy, were sunk. For the priests knew nothing of the Scriptures in their original tongues, nor yet of the Vulgate, or Latin version, except such portions of it as entered into the routine of Church services. How this darkness was gradually enlightened, and this ignorance dispelled, will be shown in the next and following chapters.

CHAPTER XIII.

REFORMERS BEFORE THE REFORMATION. THE DAWN THAT PRECEDED THE DAY.

The structure of mediæval society was as balanced and minute as clock work, and moved with equal precision. This scheme of society was the vastest, most subtle, and most complete ever devised and made to work. So marvelous was it, that our modern positivist philosophers propose to copy it when they come into power, and the organization of social forces is committed to their hands. But doubtless their copy would prove a poor parody, a contemptible travesty. Such grand, visible organizations spring from an inward life, and can be vitalized only by the forces which originate them. These forces in the middle ages were tremendous, irresistible, and far reaching. They extended to the remotest corners of Europe, penetrated into the most secret recesses, and controlled all sorts and conditions of men, from the king on his throne to the peasant in his mud hovel. But, after all, it was a yoke which neither our fathers, nor we, were able to bear. In this, it was like the old Jewish yoke, and like that, it was changed for an easier yoke and a lighter burden.

The mediæval church was seen at its best in the vigorous exercises of its mighty prerogatives from Hildebrand to Innocent III, after which the system gives unmistakeable signs of decline and decay. The causes which led to this decline, and so prepared the way for the great changes of the sixteenth century, will now engage our attention.

Of these, we may mention among the first in importance, as of time, the Crusades. Though undertaken in defense and for the extension of prevailing ideas and institutions, as often happens in this world, the issue was something quite different.

A wider experience and further knowledge of men and manners was acquired, and this prepared the way for further enlightenment. But this light was far from favorable to civil or ecclesiastical despotism. Isolation from the rest of mankind and ignorance of the world at large are conditions essential to the maintenance of all arbitrary systems, and hence the first effort of their defenders is to discourage, in every way, all intercourse with those whom they are pleased to call "outside barbarians." When influence fails to secure this isolation, laws are enacted to enforce it. From the date of the Crusades, Europeans and their descendants in America have engaged in voyages and travels to the most remote regions of the habitable earth, and we are indebted to these Crusades for no small share of this spirit of adventure and its attendant benefits.

The long residence of the popes at Avignon served to estrange the Italians, who regarded Avignon as a second Babylon. Next in order, therefore, the Babylonian captivity, as historians call it, may be assigned as a powerful cause of the decline of papal influence.

Other causes to be noticed, were the growth of a national life and spirit, the development of modern languages, the cultivation of a national literature, and the revival of ancient learning. The last named was intimately connected with the fall of Constantinople, which was surrendered to the Turks about the middle of the fifteenth century. The scholars of that city fled into Italy with their precious treasures, and began that revival of classical literature which has continued until this day, the fruits of which we trust will never be lost to the world. The rise of free cities and a middle class, may be added as new factors. But far beyond any of these causes, more potent and more wide-reaching, was the invention of printing about the middle of the fifteenth century,—an invention which even in its infancy united the vigor of Hercules with the hundred arms of Briareus, and like Antæus was unconquerable on its own ground. Scholars at once availed themselves of this new art to instruct the nations, by multiplying books, which soon found their way all over Europe.

A reformation of the Church in its head and its members, had long been the rallying cry of a liberal

reforming party throughout Europe. This was the avowed object of the three great councils of Pisa, Constance, and Basle, in the fifteenth century. But what these and all other councils, however great, failed to do, was effected at last by individual efforts. First came Wyclif, in the fourteenth century, who translated the Bible into English, denied that the Bishop of Rome had any rightful jurisdiction in England, advised the withholding of Peter's pence, and began to preach those doctrines since called evangelical. In the fifteenth century, John Huss took up Wyclif's work in Bohemia, and, after sowing far and wide the seeds of a similar reformation, suffered death by the decree of the council of Constance, into whose power he was delivered by the treachery or the fears of the Emperor Sigismund.

In the latter part of the same century, Savonarola, with the zeal of an apostle and the fiery boldness of a Hebrew prophet, denounced in Italy the corruptions of society and the Church, not sparing even the Pope, because, like Peter of old, "he was to be blamed."

In connection with these popular movements, other causes were at work, not so visibly, but more efficiently, as, the revival of the study of the Hebrew and Greek languages, under the leadership of Reuchlin, the first Hebraist of the time, and the publication of the first edition of the New Testament in

Greek, by Erasmus, the most celebrated classical scholar of the age.

In due time Tetzel appeared in Germany, offering indulgences for sale on such scandalous terms as aroused the fiery wrath of Luther, who, with Melancthon in Germany, Zwingle in Switzerland, Calvin in Geneva, and Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley in England, carried enough of the princes, priests, and people with them to secure the establishment of the reformed churches in Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Holland, and England.

Henceforth Europe is divided into two camps, only the Latin half, as it were, continuing an organic connection with the see of Rome, and this part of the Church underwent marked changes, which imparted a new vigor and enabled it to enter upon a new career. Nor can we fairly claim that all the changes introduced in other countries have proved an unmixed blessing. Liberty in Church or State is a great boon, if the people are prepared for it, and are able to regulate it by law, but it may easily, and often does, degenerate into discord, license, and anarchy. Disruption of old ties, the abandonment of an ancient faith, is always an event of the first magnitude, and usually followed by excesses, unless the effervescence of the new wine is regulated in new bottles better than it could be in the old.

The advocates of ecclesiastical tyranny argued then

as the advocates of political despotism have since, and do now, in such countries as Russia, that the safety of society is bound up with it and depends upon it. Their claim has always been that a few were born to rule, and the duty of all others is to obey the few. But experience has not confirmed the truth of the theory. The history of the last three hundred years demonstrates that the interests of Church and State are best promoted by giving all classes a representation in their government. The democratic idea cannot indeed be realized without the prevalence of popular education, but it is the genius of Protestantism to diffuse knowledge among all classes as the only basis on which it can stand.

Morality is doubtless bound up with religion, and religion, as taught in the New Testament, presupposes personal inquiry, intelligence, and conviction. The gospel can be truly preached, received, and applied only among a people who are accustomed to think and act for themselves. The mediæval clergy treated the people as children, the modern as men. How the change was made from the one system to the other, from the mediæval to the modern, the Papal to the Protestant, will be the subject of our next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE REFORMATION.

THE idea of reformation in the Church was old long before the fact. The need of it had been sorely felt for centuries. Plans to promote and secure it had been proposed by many persons eminent in the Church and in the State, but up to the sixteenth century, none of these had prospered. In Florence, Savonarola had made a great stir, and, for a few years, Italy and the papacy seemed on the eve of a great revolution. But, as often before and afterward, in Italy and elsewhere, means were found and measures successfully taken to prevent the good seed becoming rooted, or, where it had sprung up, to nip the flower in the bud. Savonarola, who sowed the seed, lost his balance, and began to do and say the very things his enemies must have desired him to do; and in this way he defeated his own plans, played into the hands of his unscrupulous foes, and had to surrender all his positions, A. D. 1498.

The story of one, in the days that preceded the great Reformation of the sixteenth century, is the story of all. One after another they rose, and one after another they fell, though not all with equal sud-

denness, or in the same manner. But all were defeated by ways and means familiar to the hierarchy, whose head was the pope,—ways and means to which the hierarchy invariably resorted, and which always succeeded with a people sunk in ignorance and steeped in superstition. The nearest approach to success was that attained by Wyclif in the fourteenth century, two hundred years before actual success.

The English people had never entirely succumbed to the papacy. Papal pretentions and exactions had been grudgingly allowed, and often resisted. The Church of England, even in acts of Parliament, had always been styled, "Ecclesia Anglicana," but never "Romana." English kings had been popular in proportion to their insular and independent spirit, and this remains true of English statesmen down to our own times. Wyclif, therefore, did but act his part as a true-born Englishman in denying the claims, as well as defying the power, of the Pope. What is remarkable and most worthy of admiration is the thoroughness with which he did his work. A truly admirable thing it is, and one that marks the sagacity, depth, and courage of this man, that he should have seriously attempted to tear up the Upas tree of popery by the roots, leaving nothing that could spring up to trouble further the realm of England. Wyclif had the astuteness to see, and the boldness to de-

clare, that the Pope had no authority in England, and hence no business to be there in any form or degree. He, accordingly, not only denounced papal prerogatives as exercised by the popes through their legates and other emissaries, but inveighed against the payment of Peter's pence, the sale of indulgences, the exaction of money by priests who pretended to be able to pray souls out of a purgatory which they had invented for their own profit, and which had no existence save in the fears of the superstitious. Wyclif also assailed the authority of tradition, and asserted the sole authority of the Bible in matters of faith. He held to the doctrine of justification by faith, while he maintained the necessity of works as the only proper evidence of faith. With St. James, he taught that faith without works is dead, and, therefore, can save neither men nor devils. In a word, Wyclif was a thoroughly evangelical Christian in the strictest sense of the word, rejecting all the superstitions of the dark ages and the inventions of the papacy, while he contended valiantly for the faith once delivered. Thus, he contemned the so-called "sacrifice of the mass" as a dangerous deceit and blasphemous fable, while he believed that the death of Christ on the cross was "a perfect, full, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world."

But, after all, Wyclif was one "born out of due time." Neither the world nor the Church was ripe

for the Reformation. True, the gospel was widely preached in his day, and truly received by thousands to the breaking down, at least of the outworks of the papacy. Nor was the influence of Wyclif's ministry lost after his death. It continued to bear fruit, more or less, till the day dawned. Like John the Baptist, Wyclif prepared the way for a revolution, an actual achievement greater than his own. Hence he is called, and justly called, "the morning star of the Reformation," of which he was the herald and forerunner, but which he did not live to see established. His ashes were disinterred by an order of the council of Constance and cast into a brook, a branch of the Avon. "And thus this brook did convey his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow sea, and this into the wide ocean. And so the ashes of Wyclif are the emblem of his doctrine which is now dispersed all the world over."

The kindred work done by John Huss, born A. D. 1373, we have already noted. Huss flourished in the fifteenth century, and in another country. He took the torch from the dying hand of the great Englishman, and passed it on to one who had the happiness of holding it so high and steady that its light was seen from afar, even by the most distant nations of Europe.

To Luther it pleased God to give the opportunity, the strength, the courage, and the perseverance to

succeed where all others had failed, and to perform a work whose fruits remain, and will doubtless survive to the end of the world. As we gaze upon this work we may well be astonished, for no man living can measure its greatness. No man before had had any permanent success in similar attempts, and the reasons of their failure are neither obscure nor far to seek. The European people were designedly kept ignorant, to be preyed on by princes and priests. The double organization which held them down was the most perfect and powerful which had ever been invented. All the wealth, the learning, and the talent of Europe were wielded in the interests of the existing order. Spies were in every city, in every church, every house. The first signs of dissent were noted and instantly transmitted. The first movements were crushed before they had time to gather strength.

In this way, Savonarola in Italy, Huss in Bohemia, Wyclif in England, and a thousand lesser lights were snuffed out. In this way, all the reforming councils, notably those of Constance and of Basle, had come to naught. Huss was martyred by the so-called liberals of a reforming council, to drown the fears and silence the objections of the conservatives. If such were the tender mercies of the most enlightened and liberal, what chance had a true reformer if he fell into the hands of the bigoted.

The truth is, there was a great deal of talk about a

reformation of the Church. That a reformation of some sort must be had, or religion perish, was admitted by all thoughtful and intelligent observers. But what was the idea of reformation generally inculcated? It was a reformation of the Church "in her head and in her members," *i. e.*, a reformation of "manners and morals," including a pruning of superstitious observances. All this was to be effected, however, without any change in the prerogatives of the hierarchy. The order and offices of the Church were to be carefully preserved and perpetuated. No change was to be made in the general polity of the Church, or principle of worship.

One point only of this kind was to be settled, viz., the relation of the popes to general councils. Were the popes, or the councils, the repository of supreme power? In case of conflict, which must yield? The decision then was that the popes must. Now a different doctrine is taught. As late as 1870, this decision was reversed, and the Pope for the first time in history was decreed by a council to be "infallible in faith and morals." Doubtless this decision, though given for the first time at this late day, is the logical and only logical conclusion of the whole matter.

If Peter was the chief, the head of the apostles, authorized to guide and control them in difficult and doubtful cases, and if the Bishop of Rome, for the

time being, is the undoubted successor of Peter, endowed with all his authority, what other power can equal his, or who shall be so bold as to deny this authority? Who that is a Christian will presume to doubt it? No one can safely or consistently, if the chain of argument be sound. But this is precisely what Luther was bold enough to deny, as Wyclif had two centuries before Luther.

It was an unparalleled act, all things considered, for Luther had both been in Rome, and was in greater personal peril than Wyclif was at any time. This man had the fate of Huss before his eyes, and had only too much reason to fear the same for himself. But he did not hesitate, nor waver, nor draw back, but carried the war into the heart of the enemy's country. For, indeed, it was a struggle in which only the bravest and the boldest could succeed. And Luther, brave as he was, would have been put down, had not God "made him to stand." This was so evident, that Luther could say, in all sincerity, that he believed "he was well known, not only on earth, but in heaven and hell, not only by men, but by angels and devils, as having been sent of God to effect a reformation of His Church." It was this persuasion that enabled him to declare at the Diet of Worms (A. D. 1521), in the presence of prelates and princes, "Unless I am refuted and convinced by proofs from the holy Scriptures, or by plain, lucid, and evident

argument, I yield my faith neither to the Pope nor to the councils alone, for it is clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Until so convinced, I can and will retract nothing, for it is neither safe nor expedient to act against conscience. Here I stand, I can do nothing else; God help me! Amen."

Acting on this declaration, Luther achieved the success denied to his predecessors, either because the time was not yet, or because their conceptions were less clear, and consequently their schemes of reformation were less radical, including only an improvement of "morals and manners." The reformation that Luther proclaimed, and which God effected through him, was a radical reformation, a reformation of both morals and worship, based on a new conception of Christianity, which, however, was not new, but as old as the apostles. It was a revival of apostolical Christianity, and a return to the methods of the apostolic church.

We can now see that no other reformation was possible or desirable. The issue once joined was fought out on these lines. The contest was bitter, and for a long time doubtful in the eyes of men. But in the eye of God, it was not doubtful. He guided it to its conclusion. This was not, indeed, such a conclusion as we should have anticipated, for God's ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts.

Truth will triumph, but not at once, nor in all the earth at its first proclamation. Enough that we are assured that the trees of God's planting shall not be rooted up, and that the Reformation was one of these trees. Small as a grain of mustard seed in the beginning, it is destined to grow till all nations repose under its protecting and refreshing shadow. And Luther was as decidedly first among the reformers as Paul was first among the apostles, but he no more stood alone than Paul did. Melancthon, Staupitz, and Carlstadt in Germany, Calvin in Geneva, Zwingle in Zurich, Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley in England, were faithful men, eminently fitted to push on the reformation which Luther had so well begun.

There are many great names in history, but since the days of the apostles, there has been no clearer head or bolder heart, firmer faith or grander work than Luther's, and he will forever be remembered and honored as the hero of "the great Reformation."

CHAPTER XV.

CHURCHES OF THE REFORMATION.

THE characteristic feature of the Roman Catholic church is uniformity ; that of the Protestant churches is unanimity. Uniformity relates chiefly to polity, discipline, and worship,—external features, which address themselves to the outward senses, and so are readily made subjects of legislation. But though rules are easily made concerning these matters, they have been enforced with great difficulty, and only after ages of persecution. It ought not to surprise or alarm us, therefore, to learn that the ideal standard of Protestantism is found to be still more difficult of attainment. Opinions and beliefs are subject to greater variations than manners and customs, even when these are not enforced by an authority to which all bow down. Add, then, the fact that while the mediæval church ackowledged the binding force of all decisions made by popes and councils, the churches of the Reformation era refused to submit to those, or any merely human authority, and we have a sufficient explanation of the "variations of Protestantism."

These variations are not without their disadvantages, and are often a source of weakness to the Protestant

cause; yet we are confident that the gain is far greater than the loss. But for the fundamental principle "the right of private judgment," the superstitions of the dark ages would have survived to our own day, even as they do in those countries and communions where this right has not been strenuously maintained.

The boast of absolute uniformity made by the unreformed churches of Christendom does not disturb us. Where they have peace and quiet, there is a corresponding absence of life and mental activity. The exercise of the grandest faculties of man is suppressed, to secure the doubtful blessing of a lifeless uniformity and the abject submission of man to his fellow.

We have only to compare those ages and countries in which the principle of authority has been most fully enforced, with those in which the principle of free inquiry is admitted, to satisfy ourselves that the latter is by far the safer. Ecclesiastics who claim and wield unlimited spiritual authority, enforce their despotic principles on communities at the expense of the highest interests and general welfare of these communities. In this respect, there is no difference between them and temporal tyrants. They both convert a naturally prosperous country from "a fruitful field" to a desert, "and call it peace." Witness Turkey as an example of the one, and Spain of the other. These are among the finest countries in the

world, blessed with a fertile soil and delicious climate, but are both cursed with despotic rulers, the one temporal, the other spiritual. In vain, therefore, all the favorable conditions secured to the peoples of these countries by nature, for they are rendered null, made useless, by the madness of the false prophet in the one, and the arrogance of the exacting priest in the other.

By common consent, Spain is a typical Popish, and Scotland a typical Protestant, country. Compare the two, and draw your own conclusions. Spain was the richest, the most fertile and valuable province of the Roman empire. Scotland is the least fertile portion of Great Britain. Her soil is thin, her climate harsh and damp. But what a contrast between Scotland and Spain. Scotland is as superior intellectually and morally, as she is inferior in natural advantages. Her material prosperity is greater still. Yet, before the Reformation, Scotland was the least civilized country in Europe, and the Scotch people were raised but little above the condition of savages. Other examples equally decisive might be cited in the old world and in the new; but it is unnecessary.

If systems of religion are to be judged by their fruits, we have abundant reason to be satisfied with the Reformation and the principles on which it was conducted. Our civil and our religious liberties are indissolubly connected. They arose together by the

heroic efforts of the same men. They now stand, and they will continue to stand, or will fall together. They cannot be separated. The history of Europe and of the world proves this.

We have, then, "a goodly heritage," and the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, far beyond the highest conceptions of the psalmist. For prophets and kings desired to see the things which we see, but did not see them, at least to the extent of our privileges, or the general prosperity of the Protestant churches.

Let us not imagine, however, that these churches sprang into existence, or developed their best features, in a day or a year. Our present vantage ground has been reached only after a long struggle, maintained with varying success, and sometimes apparently though not really doomed to defeat. Not only have disasters been suffered, but the most serious of these have arisen through the faults or imperfections of trusted leaders.

Every great cause must have its leaders, and the Reformation was no exception to the rule. To the leading reformers, we owe a great debt of gratitude. Under God, they did a great work, the greatest of any since the apostles. But they were not infallible, nor should we shut our eyes to their faults. The good of the cause requires that we should both see and note the mistakes which they made. Only in this way can

we ourselves steer clear of the same, or of others similar to them. They were men of like passions with ourselves, and encompassed by many and great difficulties, difficulties and dangers far beyond ours. It is not strange, therefore, that all of them erred in a few things, or that a few should err in all things. The wisest and best are liable to err, and a few seem incapable of sound thinking, and so are always running into extremes of one kind or another.

The leading reformers were able defenders of the faith and expounders of the gospel; but they erred in urging doubtful points, not clearly revealed, with undue pertinacity. Lutherans and Calvinists did not, and perhaps could not, agree in their opinions touching the presence of Christ in the Lord's supper, the operations of divine grace, the relation of God's purposes to man's freedom. Differences of opinion on such abstruse points were common, and perhaps as inevitable as now. But for all men and all times there is no better rule than the ancient, viz., "In essentials, unity, in non-essentials, liberty, in all things, charity." This rule has, in all ages, been oftener dishonored in the breach, than honored in the observance, but it still remains the safest rule, and the only one by which Protestants or Christians of any name or style can live and work together. While we mourn the perversity which so often has prevented its observance in the past, let us beware

lest we transgress it ourselves. It is not extravagant to say that a simple adherence to this rule, so sound and reasonable, would have saved the churches from their most fatal schisms, and secured them tenfold greater prosperity and power.

Again, the reformers were too ready to make alliances with the State, the practical effect of which was to make the Church subservient to the State, which aided it in the form of endowments and influence. The union of Church and State is no doubt attended with some incidental benefit to each, but taken with all its consequences, it must be pronounced a source of weakness to the Church, and of danger to both Church and State. It is absolutely certain that the Church loses much more than she gains by such a union, and it is to be hoped that the experiment will never be tried in the United States.

Another error of the reformed churches, was the undue prominence they gave to doctrinal teaching and belief, as compared with the Christian spirit and life. Sound doctrine is to be maintained, especially as to the essentials of Christianity ; but no degree of doctrinal soundness can atone for a neglect of the precepts and spirit of Christ. Yet for two centuries after the Reformation, the practical side of religion was comparatively overlooked, not so much in individual lives, as in the application of Christianity to society. Some most deplorable evils were acquiesced

in without serious and earnest efforts to remove them. We refer to the ferocity and frequency of wars between nations, and still more to the ignorance, oppression, and general degradation of large classes in every community. That the few should be allowed to hold down the many, the rich the poor, and the educated classes keep the people ignorant and debased on principle, and as a matter of policy, —these things cannot be regarded otherwise than as outrages against human rights, and utterly at variance both with the spirit and the precepts of the gospel of our Lord, who came to bless all men "by turning them from their iniquities" and bringing them to the acknowledgment and practice of the truth.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

The centuries from the sixth to the sixteenth, we call "the dark ages."—the ages of darkness, because the mental activity of the ancients had ceased, and modern thought had not begun. In a certain sense they were "ages of faith," but not in the highest or true Christian sense. They were rather ages of credulity, when men of all classes believed without questioning, whatever was taught them. The teachers were priests of the papal and Greek churches, who, in their turn, were, for the most part, as uncritical as their flocks. The first awakening was caused by the influx of scholars and books, chiefly in Italy, when Constantinople was taken by the Turks. The Crusades had not been fruitless at a still earlier period. The subsequent invention of printing, and the consequent cheapening of books, was another and much more powerful cause. Other influences were multiplied, and the sum total of them prepared the way for, and made possible the great Reformation of the sixteenth century.

The seventeenth century was the age of dogmatic theology, of positive and metaphysical systems of

faith,—the age of catechisms and doctrinal drill pushed to an extreme. Sermons were often two hours long, and public prayers in proportion. Men thought they were heard for their much speaking, and Christianity was reduced to creeds. All things in heaven and earth were measured by the mind of man, and made into systems which seemed congruous to each church.

Tridentine decrees, Augsburg confessions, and Westminister catechisms, were worked over, refined on, and applied with a sublime confidence in their efficacy to secure the Church and save the world. The appetite for these things grew by what it fed upon, but unfortunately the strength derived was by no means in proportion to the quantities consumed. The apostolic motto of "milk for babes," was quite forgotten, and only "the strong meat" of systematic theology was prescribed to all alike,—the young and the old, the weak and the healthy. The intention was good, but no number of good intentions could insure permanent and desirable results from such a partial and one-sided treatment of things human and divine.

A reaction followed, that ran its course during the eighteenth century, which is justly regarded as a century of comparative moral and religious indifference. Skepticism in philosophy and religion sprang up in England, Scotland, Germany, and France. In

Germany, Paulus, the first rationalist of note, prepared the way for Strauss and Renan, and the pessimists of our day. In France, the encyclopedists became the favorites of society and the fashion of the age, and led the French people on to their bloody revolution. In Scotland, Hume laid bare the insecure foundations of Locke's philosophy, which indeed left both religious truth and all intellectual beliefs without certain foundations, because, according to Locke, all our knowledge is derived from experience through the bodily senses, which fail to verify the existence of non-sensible things. In England, the reaction was less violent than on the continent, but the cause of pure religion was assailed by bold men, who were avowed deists, denying the fact of revealed religion, till its truth was defended with consummate ability by Lardner, Paley, and Bishop Butler. These writers rendered inestimable service to revealed religion from an intellectual point of view, amply justifying its claims, and demonstrating its reasonableness and neccessity. But there remained yet a higher duty to be performed and a deeper work to be done. The argument for the evidences was on the surface,—satisfied men's minds, but did not save their souls. The head was convinced, but the heart was not converted. Hence, the form of godliness prevailed without the power. Nor was this formal but inefficient faith confined to the Church of England. The Pres-

byterian church of Scotland, and even the Puritan churches of England and America, were in a similar state of Laodicean lukewarmness.

What was wanted was, a new reformation, a reformation, not doctrinal, but practical and spiritual, a demonstration of the Spirit's power in the churches and the hearts of men, a new baptism of the Holy Ghost, such as John predicted to the Jews when Christ should come. And such a baptism was at hand, for the kingdom of God was soon to appear with power. The reality of religion was to be proved as of old, by producing the same fruits. In due time, God sent forth His servants as He had raised up the prophets, and sent forth the apostles.

Whitfield and the Wesleys were men admirably qualified for the task imposed on them, and faithfully did they perform it. Their lifework is so familiar to all, that it is quite unnecessary to rehearse it here. Suffice it to say that, while John Wesley still lived, he was permitted to see the fruit of his labors, and the work of God prospering, not only among his own people, but in all the churches. The churches of Presbyterian order and those of Puritan descent, were among the first to receive the blessing, and to be revived by the good news of the gospel now proclaimed again with all the fervor of their original founders. The great Church of England, too, finally participated largely in this grand revival of religion

whose characteristic feature was the prominence given to personal or experimental religion as the one thing needful, without which all else is "as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal."

This was the teaching of Christ and His apostles, the glory of the apostolic epistles and church, but strangely suffered to be eclipsed by devotion to dogmatic systems which, taken by themselves, are dry as dust. We say this not to disparage, much less to deny, the importance of the Christian evidences and a form of sound words; but the evidences of Christianity are not Christianity itself. Sound doctrine is safe to hold, but must be vivified and vitalized to save the soul.

In the course of this great revival of the reformed churches, other denominations have sprung up, none of which equal the Wesleyans and Baptists in numbers or influence, but many of them have done yeoman service to the cause of religion and humanity. Several owe their origin to a spirit of reaction from the extremes into which it would seem the best of men and systems are prone to run. That is to say, all men, even the best, are liable to dwell on certain truths, or certain aspects of truth, to the exclusion of other truths necessary to qualify and balance them. The consequence is a disproportion or distortion of the original truth, so that it becomes, in effect, more or less untrue, and needs to be redressed and modi-

fied by a restatement of some other truth that had been overlooked or neglected.

It is in this way, and because of this limitation of the human faculties, that no one system has yet been comprehensive enough to include all the truths of the Bible, and so to secure the undoubted assent and consent of the entire body of the faithful, who sincerely profess and call themselves Christians.

If we analyse the principles which lie at the foundation of Christian churches of all denominations, we shall find that they are reducible to three, known popularly and correctly as the principles of authority, of faith, and of human reason, or, again, as sacerdotalism, evangelicalism, and rationalism. All agree, indeed, as to the necessity of an ultimate and absolute authority. The main difference relates to the organ or organism by which divine authority is declared to men, and made obligatory on their consciences. According to some, this authority is committed to an order of men called a priesthood. This is the rule of a sacerdotal order, who, in some sort, mediate between God and men. In the Roman Catholic church, one of this priestly order, the pope, is believed to be Christ's special vicegerent on earth, representing Him, and exercising His authority as no other man does or can. There are others who reject the papal theory, and yet adhere to the principle of sacerdotalism, and therefore attach great importance to the

ministrations of a priesthood, for which a tactual succession from the apostles is claimed.

Consistent Protestants of all shades agree in rejecting the sacerdotal theory of the ministry and sacraments, but they differ among themselves as to the relation of reason to faith. The generally received view is, that it is the office of reason to ascertain and affirm the evidences of revelation, and then to submit to the doctrines evidently, and by common consent, taught by revelation. The right of private judgment is not only allowed, but asserted. As a matter of fact, nearly all Christians who receive the Bible as the sole and sufficient authority, agree in the articles of their belief on all essential points. This is pretty good proof that the Bible is at unity with itself, and that the individual judgment is competent to determine what it teaches.

How, then, does it happen that there are so many variations of Protestantism? They arise, in part, on points which all agree are not so clearly announced as the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, or are matters of taste and temperament, which, doubtless, have been too little restrained for the common good.

Finally, it will be found that most of those who dissent from the substance of Christianity, as commonly received, do so on the express ground of receiving nothing which the mind of man cannot measure, or verify. And this is rationalism, a princi-

ple which is very prevalent, but actively applied in different degrees. Evangelical Christians do not allow that the Bible teaches, or that they believe, anything contrary to reason, but many things above our reason.

These, then, are the three principles which underlie and determine the three principal phases of Christianity which have been accepted by men, and which still survive. On these three lines it would seem, therefore, that all churches are, or ought to be, constituted, and there seems no valid or sufficient reason why all Christians should not definitely range themselves under one or another of these three heads, and so place themselves as to be in accord and in communion with the sacerdotal, evangelical, or rationalistic wing of the Christian church. For, doubtless, all these are in some sense branches of the Christian church, and the only questions are, which one of them most truly and efficiently represents the teachings of the New Testament and the mind of Christ, and which will probably prevail in the final adjustment of the Christian religion to the wants of the world? "The different Christian denominations have proved their right to exist by flourishing, and by the evident tokens of the Divine blessing." (*Gladstone on Heresy and Schism.*)

CHAPTER XVII.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

The eighteenth century was an age of reform and revolution, a transition period from old methods to new. The men of that age labored, and we have entered into their labors. One of the most striking of these results is the great change of the condition of the masses in respect to their temporal affairs. The improvement is most marked, of course, in our own country, for here all the circumstances are most favorable. But even in Europe, where it was once the settled policy of the upper classes to keep down the lower, this policy is no longer pursued with the resolution and tenacity of former times. All over the world, the toiling millions are daily becoming more aware of the great wrongs which have been done them, and are beginning to be conscious of their ability to redress these wrongs. Hence the restlessness and revolutions which characterize the countries of Europe, and to some extent those of Asia as well. The field is indeed the world, which groaneth and travaileth in pain, and will find redemption both temporal and spiritual in accepting and acting upon the pure principles of the gospel. These principles have

never yet been truly received, and faithfully applied in their various relations to all sorts and conditions of men. When they are so applied, the love of Christ in our hearts will work only good to our neighbors, and all men will endeavor to do unto others as they would have others do unto them. In that happy age, the evils of ignorance and poverty will no longer remain to degrade a large part of mankind.

The successful assertion of human rights in the political sphere, is another and scarcely inferior proof of the improved condition of the civilized world. Here, again, our own country is in the van, reacting, however, on the old world by its successful example of a free, united, and properous country, where all classes enjoy their civil rights, and are equal before the law. If we are able to perpetuate our popular form of government, the day is not distant when it will, in substance, be adopted throughout Christendom, and in time throughout the world.

Popular education is, at once, the cause and the concomitant of political liberty. Where the people are ignorant, they are, and can be, kept in a state of both social and political servitude, superstitious in their religion, and the abject slaves of princes and priests. But give them education, and all races enter at once upon a career of improvement in every direction. They are more intelligent as farmers, mechanics, and merchants. They improve all the implements of

labor, and invent new ones. They also discover new principles and new methods of applying old ones. In fine, they soon learn the fact that "all men are born free and equal" in the sense of the declaration of independence, viz.: they have the same natural faculties, rights, and duties. The enjoyment of life and the pursuit of happiness, are rights common to mankind, and are to be secured to all without distinction of race, color, or previous condition.

Precisely here, however, the question arises how is this knowledge to be imparted, and how these rights, when understood, are to be successfully asserted? History shows but one way, and that is the good way of the gospel. Liberty, in ancient times, meant the liberty of a few favored individuals, or races, or cities, to tyrannize over the less gifted and less favorably born and brought up. Christian liberty is the liberty, the right and the duty, of the fortunate and happy, to help the unfortunate and the unhappy, to instruct the ignorant, feed the hungry, heal the sick, comfort the afflicted, and to do good to all especially to the poor and needy, and see that they have succor afforded and right done them. This is not the spirit of the world, nor of unregenerate man. But it is the spirit, the very essence and substance, of the gospel in its practical bearings on human society. Christianity has, indeed, a still more glorious message and is, therefore, in respect to man's spiritual nature, a still

more glorious evangel. Far be it from us to ignore this higher purpose of God in sending His Son into the world to redeem it from the power, the habit, and the guilt of sin, which is a transgression of God's law, a law holy, perfect, just, and good, and which therefore cannot be violated by any without the gravest consequences. The point we make here, as once before, is this, that even Protestant Christians and churches, have often overlooked the practical present duties we owe to mankind in respect to their temporal well-being, which our blessed Savior loved to promote and did promote in so many ways. Our fathers set us a noble example in providing (for the first time) for the education of the whole people, and putting them on the road of universal progress. But there remain many evils to be suppressed, much ignorance to be enlightened, debasing habits to be abandoned, and depraved appetites to be overcome. Even in our own land, the number and power of influences abroad which are adverse, as well to the gospel as to the happiness of our people are truly appalling. And if our own countrymen were thoroughly evangelized, and were living as Christians should live, the field is still the world. What a field in extent, and in the amount of labor required to subdue it! Where are the men and women for missionary work, in all nations, carrrying to all races the good news, imparting a knowledge of salvation, and

preparing the way for the amelioration of each and every race? What shall we say to these things? Who will dare counsel indifference or even delay? Like the children of Israel, the Christian host is commanded to "go forward," till the land of promise is reached, entered, and possessed.

Much has been done already, but much more remains to be done. "The more excellent way," too, is plainly pointed out by the Christian agencies which have proved most successful. The formation of Bible and tract societies, the prosecution of missionary enterprises at home and abroad, Sunday-school and other unions for the more efficient propagation of the gospel in all parts of the country and of the world,—all these agencies have been approved of God, and are acceptable to most good men.

Devout Christians in the nineteenth century should earnestly inquire how they can most successfully unite their forces for the further advancement of the Church of Christ in all lands. We are attached to our several churches, though in different degrees, but ought we not to lay more stress on the things in which we agree, than on those in respect to which we differ? Are not the things in which we agree fundamental, and those about which we differ non-essential, proved so by the fact that other churches and Christians, who differ from us, are, nevertheless, as active, useful, consistent, devout, as we? If we com-

pare the Christian church in all its branches, with any other institution, comparison is greatly to the advantage of the church. But if we compare one Christian denomination with another, even sectarian prejudice can scarcely blind our eyes to the fact that, practically and for all the purposes of the gospel, one de-denomination differs from another, only as one star differeth from another, each diffusing the same light and each displaying the power, wisdom, and goodness of God.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE.

The material prosperity, the growth of civil and religious liberty, the general diffusion of knowledge, —in fine, the advancement of mankind to a higher plane of being and action, makes it certain that old institutions must give way to new ones, or else adapt themselves to the new social and intellectual order. To this rule the Christian church, as an organization, is no exception. The revival of learning in the fifteenth century made necessary the great reformation of the sixteenth, and prepared the way for it. The political and social revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries determined the condition of the nineteenth century, and our age is confessedly a period of transition and not of settlement. We are in the way where old and different roads both meet and terminate, and we have to strike out a new path for ourselves. The experience of the past is highly valuable to us, and should be diligently heeded, but is not of itself conclusive. The world is awaking to a new life, and demands institutions corresponding to its new wants and aspirations. For the first time in the history of the world, all men are recognized as

"born free and equal," with equal rights, privileges, and duties. All are striving to better their condition. This gives rise to a degree of general restlessness and activity before unknown. Men are impatient of restrictions and of authority, distrustful of those who assume to guide them, and resentful toward any presuming to dictate to them. For the present, this new order is unfavorable to the due influence of the Christian religion. Nevertheless, religion is "the one thing needful," the supreme necessity of our nature, and no degree of worldly prosperity can supply or supersede it. The highest attainments, the greatest discoveries in science, and unlimited temporal prosperity, leave man as they found him, hungry and thirsty, and ready to exclaim of a life without God, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Science cannot, and does not pretend to, solve the problems of man's higher nature, duties, and destiny. If these are revealed anywhere, it is in the Bible. The question comes back to us, then, how can the religion of the Bible be so presented to men in their new conditions as to arrest their attention, renew their hearts, and save their souls?

In attempting to answer this question, let us say at the outset, that we are not among those who look for an entirely "new" church, or believe such a church either possible or desirable. Even our political constitution grew out of the English, and all

existing institutions have their roots in older ones, from which they sprang. Christianity itself, in its broadest sense, is not an exception to this rule, for it sprang up from Judaism, as Judaism was developed from the institutions of the patriarchs.

As to Christianity, we have seen that it has existed and flourished under three leading forms, which really include all its visible manifestations to the world, viz., the sacerdotal, the evangelical, and the rationalistic. Is it not probable that one of these forms, or a modification of each, will prevail in the future? And if one, which? Will it be the sacerdotal? This form of Christianity prevailed from the age of Constantine to that of Luther, and was perhaps suited to the times in which it flourished. It still survives in several countries, and has been revived even in churches called Protestant. Great efforts are made to introduce it into the new world, but so far from prevailing, we believe that it is certain to decline and disappear. It is at variance, total and hopeless variance, with our age, and will be still more antagonistic to the next and future ages. All the signs of the times are unfavorable to it, and the stars in their courses fight against it. Its assertion of exclusiveness, of authority, of a divine legation, will find but few adherents. Its past history will be fatal to it, for all over Europe it has been in alliance with, and the chief abettor of, tyranny and oppression in every

form. Sacerdotalists, the world over, distrust the masses, deny the right of private judgment, favor only ecclesiastical education, and in a thousand ways set themselves against the spirit and tendencies of the times in which we live. We have no fears, therefore, of its acceptance by any considerable number of the American people, or that it will linger many generations in Europe. It is certainly inconsistent with our origin, our history, and the general drift of our people. The advocates of that system flatter themselves that the drift of the American and English people will be changed, and turned back into the old channels. But all who lay this flattering unction to their souls are destined to disappointment. No great historical race has ever had more marked characteristics than the English speaking race, and especially the American branch of this race. And we shall accomplish our destiny, and that in the direction we have taken both from circumstances and from choice. The past at least is secure, and the future will not belie our past. We shall not disown the work of our ancestors, nor number ourselves among those who count themselves transgressors, by building again what they had carefully destroyed. Like our fathers, we believe in the Bible and in Christ, and shall hold fast to the end our faith in both, and our right to interpret their teachings for ourselves, and transmit this right to those who come

after us. This resolution will forever separate us from sacerdotal forms of the Christian faith, for it is of the essence of sacerdotalism to claim "the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven," the doors of which are open and shut by priestly offices and authority. This is our opinion of the system, many of the advocates of which are personally men of probity and worth.

On the other hand, our unfailing adherence to the Christian faith, as plainly revealed and generally received, removes us equally far from rationalism, which claims to modify the teaching of Christ as human reason shall seem to require. No doubt this type of Christianity has many sincere adherents, and is far more likely to prevail among us than the mediæval or sacerdotal. But there are good reasons for thinking that it will not prevail in the future relatively more than in the past.

In the first place, it sprang up in New England under the most favorable conditions, and yet has scarcely held its own for two generations. The reason of this is not far to seek. Rationalism does not satisfy the human heart, and is unstable in all its ways. What the reason of one man, or one generation, declares to be self-evident, the reason of the next man or the next generation declares to be quite unfounded in reason, and destitute of proof. The consequence is constant vacillation between ex-

tremes, leading often to a reaction from skepticism to superstition and the extremes of the highest sacerdotalism.

The old deists rejected revelation as wholly superfluous, asserting the being of God, the separate existence of the soul, and its immortality to be self-evident truths. The new infidelity, whether called agnosticism, positivism, or pantheism, declares that we neither know, nor can know or prove, any positive belief of these or any unseen things. The objection to rationalism in religion is that, sooner or later, it leads to skepticism, to doubt and disbelief of all religious truth. This is fatal. For what we want is "an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast, entering into that within the vail," where Christ our forerunner has entered, and where He liveth to make intercession for us, Himself presenting the prayers of all who come unto the Father by Him. He is our only priest, the one mediator between God and man. We need no other, and will have no other, for "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, Christ Jesus," the corner stone of our faith. And to whom can we go, but unto Him who alone hath the words of eternal life? He is indeed our only hope, the only object of our faith, in whom we have redemption through His blood, shed, and freely shed, for us all.

This is the faith of the ages, the old, old story of the gospel, which is also new, forever new, the same

yesterday, to-day, and forever. We believe that Jesus was "He who should come," according to the prophets, and we look for no other. Christ, then, is to be our Lord and Master in the future, as in the past. The only question is, how can we most successfully, effectively, and adequately proclaim and enforce this faith as the final religion of mankind? And further, what modifications are needed in our existing systems and methods? A few will reply that none are. But the most intelligent, thoughtful, and far-seeing are well aware that our present order is only provisional. Organization is the strong point of sacerdotalism, and the weak one of Protestantism. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." So our Savior said, and how true it was, and still is. And shall there be no improvement in this respect? Shall we learn nothing even from our opponents? Can we afford to give them the great advantage which attaches to superior organization and tactics in their struggle for supremacy in this land? If we are wise and understand the things which pertain to our prosperity and peace, we shall not. But what more can be done? Shall we abandon our present order, disband our churches, and give up all our organizations in the vain hope of forming a new church without the defects inherent in those to which we owe so much? By no means. For this would, and could, end only

in disappointment. Still, we can and ought to do something to make our churches more efficient, more in accord with the new age upon which we are entering. It would be presumptuous for any one to attempt to answer all the questions which arise in this connection, or to solve all the difficulties of the subject. This fact, however should not deter us from looking these difficulties in the face, and seeking a solution of them which possibly we may find, in part, even now.

First of all, to speak of the Bible, because in the order of thought it comes first. While it is true that its divine inspiration and authority are to be asserted, may we not, and ought we not to allow, without hindrance, a greater diversity of views touching those questions which have already arisen, and will continue to arise, concerning the relation of the Jewish dispensation to the Christian, the nature of inspiration, so that it is authoritative and final, and also whether it extends to secular events, names, dates, etc., or is limited to the communication of moral and religious truths which concern our relations to God.

Secondly, the ministry, the Church, and the sacraments must be presented more in their practical, and less in their theoretical and metaphysical bearings. The necessity of this is evident from the change in the habits of our people in respect to church going and Sabbath observance. The religious observance of the Lord's day, including public worship, is by no

means so common as it was. What can we do to arrest this downward tendency and to awaken new interest in both? Obviously, we must not fail to convince our fellow citizens of the great importance of the Lord's day as a day of rest from labor and pleasure seeking, as well as the intimate and probably indissoluble connection between the custom of public worship in the house of God, and the retention of those beliefs which lie at the foundation of what is most valuable and sacred in our social life and political institutions. The evil of which we speak, and which we would fain see corrected, is probably most common in the country, where the population is more scattered, and attains greater proportions from the want of unity of purpose. Surely it is the dictate of common sense that in such places, all real Christians should unite in building a church and supporting an acceptable minister, till some one denomination is strong enough to assume the responsibility. And in more populous communities a spirit of union should be encouraged rather than of division and discord.

Much may also be done to improve the musical and other parts of the service, to make it more interesting and edifying. But precisely how far changes should be introduced, and of what kind, must, of course, be left to the discretion and judgment of each church or congregation. What is necessary, above all, is that we hold to the head, which is Christ, who is over us

all and blessed forever. And happy are they who are not offended in Him, and hold fast to Him, in all things. He is the great Reconciler, reconciling us to the Father, to each other and ourselves, reducing all conflicting elements to order and harmony.

The Church of the future is indeed a large subject, too large to be disposed of in a single chapter, or by any one man. Nevertheless, of what we have said, this is the sum. The Church of Christ in the future will not be generally, or largely, either sacerdotal or rationalistic, for the first of these principles is of the past, and now passing away under the enlightening influences and agencies of increasing civilization. To go back to mediæval methods and institutions would be like turning our backs to the sun, that we might walk by the light of the moon. This is no mere figure of speech. In sacerdotalism, we have the light of the gospel as reflected by a body which has no light in itself, therefore cannot shed any light upon others except indirectly, after it has been modified and changed by passing through itself as a medium. Happily, the Sun of Righteousness has risen upon the world with healing in His rays, in which it is our privilege to rejoice and grow up as "trees of the Lord's own planting," which no priestly caste has the power to pluck up.

To this generation, rationalism is a principle far more attractive than sacerdotalism. But rationalism

never has found, and never can find, general acceptance, because too vague, uncertain, and vacillating.

The Church, then, must be essentially evangelical, because this creed is clearly taught in the New Testament, as conceded even by the most eminent rationalists. It was faithfully and fully expounded by the apostles, especially by St. Paul, the greatest of the apostles, and has been held in substance by the faithful of all subsequent ages. This is the faith which has overcome the world in the past, and will overcome it in the future. But to do this in the future, it must be cleared of ambiguities and excrescences. Doctrinal formulas and metaphysical creeds must no longer be elevated and enforced as of equal authority with the teaching of the divine Word. What Christians hold as the common faith must be maintained as essential, and their points of difference must be treated as subordinate to the higher interests of the gospel.

In brief, the church of the future is to be developed on the same lines as the church in the past, only discarding more and more human authority, and adhering more and more closely to the teaching, the example, and the spirit of Christ. Christ is the one foundation on which we must all build, if our work is to endure when it will be tried as by fire. All else may be burnt up, if it stands in the way of this happy consummation, as of no permanent or real value. In

vain, we or others "teach for doctrine the commandments of men." Christ is the substance of the Bible, the beginning and the end of the book which we believe reveals the will of God to us. His salvation means a deliverance from sin, its guilt and power. While chiefly looking to the future and showing the way to a holy, endless life with and in Christ, the Gospel also is the great power of God for elevating the condition of mankind in this present world. Under its influence, the hoary despotisms of antiquity have disappeared, the nations are inspired with new hopes and aims, and the glorious liberty of the sons of God will yet be attained in the work and in the Gospel of Christ.

Then will the Savior see the travail of His soul and be satisfied. No longer despised and rejected of men, He will reign Lord of lords and King of kings. In that day wars will cease, idolatry be abolished, slavery will no longer exist, ignorance will no longer prevail, poverty will be exceptional and quickly relieved, and the rights of man will be everywhere respected and easily defended, for "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord of hosts," a mountain which shall then fill the earth, inhabited by a holy seed of the Lord's own planting, which shall grow up before Him, a people prepared of the Lord.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

FEW WORDS ON CREEDS.

In submitting a few thoughts on the Apostles' Creed, I desire to preface them by some preliminary remarks on creeds in general.

Some persons are disposed to question the value of creeds, while others go so far as to decry them, and deny that they serve any good purpose, or have any use other than to bind men's consciences and suppress freedom of thought. The fact, however, is that all forms and degrees of belief and of unbelief, imply a creed. The one real question is, shall this creed be expressed in terms, written down, printed, and subscribed to by those whose faith it symbolizes. If one believes in God, that belief is a creed in the original and proper sense of the word. "Credo," "I believe." And if one does not believe in God, even that is a creed, *i. e.*, it is a belief that there is no God. Strictly speaking, then, the unbeliever has a creed, as well as the believer. The former has the disadvantage, however, of having a negative creed.

Creeds, then, are a necessity of our nature and situation, and, indeed, of all intelligent beings, all beings who think. The real points at issue relate to the

extent and character of creeds. How far shall they go? What propositions shall they include, and in what terms shall they be expressed? Here we have questions on which men may and do differ. Experience, however, seems to show that creeds should not be too long or intricate, or include doubtful points, nor be expressed in abstract or philosophical terms. A creed should be brief, so as to be often recited and easily remembered. It should include only those doctrines which are clearly taught in the New Testament, and which, therefore, are admitted by all, or nearly all, who, through the ages, have professed and called themselves Christians in the New Testament sense of the word, viz., believers in Christ. Questions which, originating with the schoolmen of the middle ages, have been disputed for centuries, should be excluded from a creed designed for the use and edification of the great body of Christian believers.

Not to exclude such questions is the weak point in those creeds which have been the occasion, if not the cause, of dividing churches and fostering endless disputes among Protestant Christians, and introducing dissensions which have been carried so far as to make it practically impossible, in many places, to support a preacher of any denomination of Christians.

Finally, such a creed as we have in mind should be expressed in clear, simple, plain terms, which none need misunderstand, one easily comprehended by all

old enough, intelligent enough, and instructed enough, to be members of any Christian church, remembering the apostolic injunction, "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye."

But it may be asked, whether such a simple creed as this will prove sufficient protection to the doctrinal purity of the Church. Will not heresies arise, causing a good deal of trouble? Doubtless they will, but no more than under the opposite system of minute and metaphysical creeds. Those creeds produced our present divisions, by causing powerful and successful reactions against them, going to the opposite extreme. And this result is one which will always follow them. Those Protestant churches which require as a condition of membership the simplest of all creeds, are less annoyed by heresies than those that have insisted on maintaining the longest and most subtle articles of faith.

Finally, it is highly desirable, and should be regarded as almost indispensable, that a common creed, intended for the use of local congregations, should be drawn up either in the express language of the Bible, or in terms so nearly allied to those of holy Scripture, that their relation to, and agreement with, these Scriptures will be obvious to all. And this remark holds true of all Christian teaching, including the preaching of the Word. Men have grown weary of logomachies and all subtle systems founded on

philosophical theories of man or of God, the divine decrees, and eternal foreknowledge. What the Church, as well as the world, is waiting for, is a clear, simple, consistent statement of the things most certainly believed among us, because they are founded upon the sure warrant of the Scriptures. This would include only those things which are necessary to the maintenance and integrity of the Christian faith, no less than to the present welfare and future salvation of the souls of men.

OUR BELIEF IN GOD.

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth."

THE Apostles' Creed is so called, not because it originated with the apostles in its present form, but because it is a compendium of apostolic teaching. Compare it with the first twenty verses of the fifteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians, and you cannot fail to perceive how perfect is the agreement between these two summaries of the essentials of the gospel.

The creed contains a few antiquated phrases which need to be explained, and will be, in the course of this exposition.

We begin with the first clause of the creed, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty."

Why "I" rather than "we," seeing this is a common creed, a confession of the common faith? The

singular pronoun is used to make it the confession of each worshiper, who thus declares his individual belief. This makes it more precise, personal, and emphatic. Each one makes the declaration for himself, and feels the individual assurance consequent upon the emphatic declaration.

"I believe." What is belief? Strictly speaking, it is not knowledge. That is to say, it is not absolute knowledge. But it is a firm persuasion of the mind and heart, founded on what is deemed conclusive evidence. This evidence is not mathematical, but moral. It does not amount to a demonstration which cannot be denied without impugning the veracity of our faculties. Mathematical proof admits of no degrees, moral evidence does. Nevertheless, the mind may, and often does, feel perfect assurance of the certainty based entirely on moral considerations. This is the reasoning of Emanuel Kant, probably the first of modern philosophers. According to Kant, what we call a moral demonstration, the dictate of the practical reason whose province is morals and religion, is far more certain than the conclusions of the speculative reason, merely intellectual processes.

"I believe in God." It is only in our day that it has become necessary to say that by this term we do not mean merely, or at all, nature, the cosmos, the sum of all things, much less the material universe alone, or nature including all sentient beings. The

Christian's God, the God of the Bible and of the creed, is the Creator of all things, not the sum total of them. He is a person, and has all the attributes of a person. The most distinctive of these is the will, and we believe that by God's will or power, the worlds were made. Hence we declare that He is "the maker of heaven and earth," *i. e.*, of all things that exist, visible and invisible, "thrones, principalities, and powers," And without Him, was not anything made that is. He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end of all things. He alone hath immortality, *i. e.*, the ground of His existence in Himself. All others derive their existence from Him, and if immortal, owe their immortality to His will, which is but another term for His power, by which He made all things.

Hence, also, He is declared to be "the Father," *i. e.*, the *origo et fons*, the origin and source, of all that lives, or moves, or has being. When we say that He is "Almighty," we simply mean that He can do all that it is possible to do, all that power, as such, can effect, in the nature of things. But not even He can make two mountains without a valley between them, for this is not possible in the nature of things.

Finally, He is in the creed called "the Father," because He is personally distinct from the Son, who is the image of the Father and the brightness of His glory. That is to say, God, the eternal, invisible, immortal, "dwelling in the light which no man can

approach unto, whom no man hath seen, or can see," is shown forth and made manifest to man in the person of His Son, who is full of grace and truth. And this God is our God, the Father everlasting, infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, a God not far from any one of us, if we seek Him aright; but wholly unlike and infinitely above the impersonal god of the pantheist, on whose lips the word is misleading, meaning only the visible universe in its totality. Entirely distinct from the works of His hand, is the God whom we worship in spirit, and truth, an infinite Spirit, endowed with will, wisdom, and benevolence, who ordereth all things in heaven and earth, who hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness: to whom we are both accountable and shall give account for the deeds done in the body. How marvelous and how manifest the difference between the pantheistic god, without even conciousness, and our God, to whom all things are open and known.

This God is not only the God whom we worship, but "our Father" as well, and we owe it to the gospel that we can call Him by this dear appellation. The God of the old English deists was a God afar off, quite indifferent to the wants and worship of human beings. Not so with the God revealed in the Scriptures and declared by the Apostles' Creed to be the primary object of religious faith. With Him there

are no such degrees of dignity as determine and limit human regard. The fall of a sparrow is not beneath His notice, much less the weakness and prayers of those whom He hath made in His own image.

THE INCARNATION.

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

JESUS is a proper name, meaning a savior, and is equivalent to Joshua in Hebrew, of which it is the Greek form. The name was given to our Lord because He should "save His people from their sins." This was His mission on earth. For this purpose He was born and for this He came into the world, as well as to bear witness of the truth, which means the same thing, viz., that men are to be saved from their sins through Christ alone. He is the Savior of mankind, "mighty to save," "able to save to the uttermost all who come to God through Him." He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

He is also "the Christ" or anointed One, set apart by God, consecrated by His Spirit to the office of Messiah. "Christ," then, is not a proper name, but an official designation of the Messiah, for which it is the Greek equivalent. He is also called "Shiloh," or the sent of God, bringing peace, "the Desire of all nations," the one Mediator between God and man,

the man Christ Jesus, or Jesus who is the Christ, of whom Moses and the prophets did speak.

In the Scripture, Jesus is designated as "the only begotten Son of God," meaning that He is the Son of God in a different and higher sense than any creature is. "Begotten of His Father before all worlds." "Light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father." For proof of this, see St. John's Gospel, both in the introduction and in every part of the same.

"Our Lord." No man, says St. Paul, "can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost." A weighty saying, and of solemn import, the force of which will be perceived by referring to Peter's reply to the inquiry of Jesus, "And who say ye that I am?" And Simon Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then the Savior said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father who is in heaven. And on this rock I will build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

An ancient heresy maintained that all that was human of Christ was His body, to which the divine nature was united. This theory has been revived in our day, and defended by interpreting literally the text, "The Word was made flesh," stress being laid on the word "flesh" as if it excluded the hypothesis of a human soul. But the advocates of this view

should have known the contrary to be true, that the term includes the soul as well as the body. The point is not immaterial, but vital, since upon a correct view of it depend the most important relations of our Lord to us and to the Father. If He had no soul, then He was not a real man, for the body apart from the soul does not and cannot make a man. All that is most precious in the New Testament account of Christ requires us to believe that His divinity assumed our nature in all that is proper to it, including soul and body. When He was an hungered, weary, or asleep, the body was affected; but when He prayed to God, reasoned with man, chose and loved His friends, a human soul and mind appeared.

The second point is that, without this human soul, Christ could not have been tried in all things as we, and would not therefore have been made like unto His brethren, nor have been perfect as the Captain of our salvation. Unless He had been the man Christ Jesus, He could not have grown in wisdom and stature, nor shared with us the joys and sorrows of life, in feasts and fasts, in praise and prayer, in word and deed.

A third point is, that without this human soul, He could not have been touched with a feeling for our infirmities, and so could not have become our faithful High Priest. As the Roman patron appeared for his client, so Christ hath appeared in heaven for us. He

is our great Advocate there, by whose all-sufficient merit we are raised to heavenly places.

"The Lord is come! The world's great stage
Begins a brighter, better age;
The old gives place unto the new;
The false retires before the true;
A progress that shall never tire,
A central heat of sacred fire,
A hope that soars beyond the tomb,
Reveal that Christ has truly come.

"The Lord is come! In ev'ry heart
Where truth and mercy claim a part;
In every land where right is might,
And deeds of darkness shun the light;
In every church where faith and love
Lift earthward thoughts to things above;
In every holy, happy home,
We bless Thee, Lord, that Thou hast come."

CHRIST'S PASSION, DEATH, AND DESCENT INTO HADES.

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell."

PONTIUS PILATE was a typical politician. His ruling passion was love of office and official distinction and emoluments. To attain his ends he was unscrupulous in the use of means. Not that he was a cruel, or very corrupt man. He was quite up to the average of politicians as they were then, or are now. He was unpopular among the Jews, who were only

too ready to avail themselves of any technical omission of duty to accuse him of aiding and abetting treason to the emperor and the imperial government. Of this he was well aware, and so dared not defy their malice to do its worst. If he, or Jesus, must be sacrificed to that malice, it had better be Jesus than he, though Pilate plainly saw and confessed that there was "no fault found in Him." The leaders of the Jews had long pursued Jesus with unrelenting hostility. They were determined to destroy His influence and put Him down. To effect this they used all the weapons known to bigots, persecutors and inquisitors of all ages and countries. They maligned His motives and misrepresented His doctrines. They accused Him of offences the most foreign to His life and character. And they did not rest till they had accomplished their purpose. When Jesus stood before Pilate they clamored for His blood, saying, "If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him unto thee." To Pilate's proposal of releasing Him, after they had humiliated, insulted, and cruelly tormented Him, they raised the cry, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." And so Jesus was scourged and delivered up to death. Compelled to bear His cross, He fainted by the way and was relieved of the burden by an obscure disciple, whom the soldiers obliged to carry the cross.

Arrived at the place of crucifixion, the leaders of

the Jews and the mob taunted Jesus as one who saved others, but could not save Himself. And in this they spake truly. For this purpose was He born, and to this end came He into the world. "Though He was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, He made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man. And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

He suffered not for any sins of His own, nor on His own account in any way, but He tasted death for every man; His soul was made a sacrifice for sin. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." His death was the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. "In that He died He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth He liveth unto God." Surely He shed His blood "for many for the remission of their sins."

Such are the positive, plain declarations of Scripture, both of our Lord and of His apostles, and happy is he who can receive them as faithful sayings, worthy of our acceptance, assuring us that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and is "able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him."

Men may speculate, as men for ages have speculated, upon the theory of the atonement, but the fact will always remain that "for us men and our salvation" Christ came into the world, was crucified, dead and buried. It was certainly not a commercial transaction, but a governmental, and still more a moral motive and movement, which began with the incarnation and ended with the death on the cross, or rather with His resurrection, which declared or demonstrated Jesus to be the Son of God, and showed that His death was "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

This was the undoubted faith of the early and universal Church of Christ, and this the explicit declaration of the primitive liturgies, instituted expressly for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, in which the faithful were to show forth the Lord's death till He came the second time for our salvation. Let us not then seek to be wise above what is written for our instruction by the apostles of Christ, who knew the mind of Jesus.

The scheme of redemption contemplates as its chief end to save men from their merited punishment by substituting the death of Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice, a sacrifice symbolized by the ancient propitiatory sacrifices of the Jews. In the divine government, the death of Christ is made to answer

the ends of the law, that would have been answered by suffering the penalty in their own persons, in respect to all those who by repentance and faith unite themselves to Christ, and thus procure for themselves the benefits of His vicarious sufferings.

The descent into hell, or Hades, which in the creed means the same thing, viz., the place of departed spirits, was a later addition to the creed to refute the heresy which taught that Christ's death was apparent rather than real. This clause teaches that His human soul was separated from His body and entered Hades, the abode of all human souls after death, and before the resurrection.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He arose from the dead."

Life abounds in contrasts. But we shall look in vain for any more striking than those presented in the conduct of the apostles at the two great festivals of the Jews, the Passover and the Pentecost, in the year of Christ's crucifixion. When their Master was betrayed at the Passover, the apostles were easily intimidated, became frightened, lost their presence of mind, and fled from the face of their enemies. They had trusted in Jesus as the future deliverer of

Israel from the yoke of a foreign bondage, and believed that He would soon restore the kingdom to Israel. But His apprehension, trial and death had put an end to all their hopes, which were buried with Him. Apparently all was at an end. The prophet of Galilee, the prince of peace, He who declared Himself the Son of the Highest, was crucified, dead, and buried; while His followers, frightened at the thought of being identified with Him, were fleeing from their familiar haunts, and seeking refuge in the obscure abodes of friends and disciples. How marked and marvelous the change in their anticipations and actions, but the change was far less marked and marvelous than that which transpired fifty days afterward at the feast of Pentecost.

At the Passover, Peter was afraid to face a maid servant; at the Pentecost he dared to confront the chief priests and Pharisees, as well as the foreign Jews who had come up to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast. Calm, collected, courting danger, the apostles now feared nothing, and were ready to hazard their lives for the Lord Jesus. Brought before the rulers of the Jews, they were unmoved by their threats, and replied, "Whether we ought to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye, but we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard." Nor was this a momentary exhibition of courage, a transient impulse, but the beginning of what proved to be a

permanent and radical change in their character and conduct. From this time, they counted not their lives dear unto them, "so that they might testify of the grace of God and the gospel of the Lord Jesus which was committed to them." In point of fact, they continued in this course till it ended in death, undeterred and undismayed by every form of trial and suffering, always bearing about in their bodies the marks of stripes and imprisonment, the signs and seals of their ministry.

If now we ask the cause of this great change, we find it not only coincident with the resurrection of Christ, but indissolubly connected and bound up with it as the chief cause, the only cause adequate to explain it. They themselves are witnesses of the fact. They declare not only the fact of the resurrction, but the power of it, as sufficient to account for all that followed. Of the fact they were eye witnesses, and went everywhere preaching it as the stupendous marvel and miracle of time, on the truth of which the entire gospel depended. God had declared Jesus to be His Son, by raising Him from the dead, of whom He was the first fruits. For if Jesus died and rose again, then all who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him when He shall appear the second time for our salvation. But if Christ is not risen, then is our faith vain, and all who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished, and we are yet in our sins. The entire

scheme of the gospel presupposes the resurrection of Christ, and stands or falls with it. All His teachings, all His promises, are based on this as their corner stone. Take the hope of immortality, for instance. Men had longed to believe it true, and philosophers had argued for it with much plausibility. But it was a question environed with difficulties and obscured by doubts. It was the question of the ages, ever recurring, never settled. To many, the arguments for, and the arguments against, seemed nearly equally balanced. Doubtless the arguments for it were really the stronger, and were urged by philosophers of the greatest spiritual insight. But the majority of mankind are not reasoners, and are not spiritual, but carnal, and so controlled by the influences of sense. The evidence of the senses is indeed the chief obstacle to our faith in immortality. We see what death is; we are witnesses of the dissolution and decay of the body. All the senses are directly and powerfully appealed to, and through them the imagination is kindled earthward, rather than heavenward. And doubtless it was in view of this fact, that our heavenly Father vouchsafed to give us corresponding proofs, the evidence that we need, and which alone could suffice to dissipate our natural fears induced by sensible demonstrations.

What mankind needed, then, was not new evidence of an intellectual kind, arguments addressed to the

reason, but sensible proofs to counteract the teaching of the senses which seemed to discourage all hope of a life beyond the grave. And precisely this we have in Christ's resurrection, which was a fact addressed to the senses of the the disciples, about which they could not be deceived. As witnesses of that fact they went into all the world, preaching the gospel to every creature, The gospel cry was, "Awake, awake from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life." "Let us not sorrow therefore as others, which have no hope, but believe that all those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

Now this preaching of the apostles was certainly true, unless they were false witnesses for Christ. They themselves join this issue, that, unless Christ rose from the dead, they were convicted of false witness. That any twelve men should conspire to tell such a falsehood at the risk of ease, health, and life itself, is contrary to all our experience of mankind. Add the fact, that the apostles were evidently and confessedly among the highest in morality, in development of conscience, and we have every assurance of their integrity and the reality of the event to which they declared themselves eye-witnesses.

To say that though they were not and could not be false witnesses, yet that they may have been enthusiasts, and so self-deceived, is a theory equally untenable. Enthusiasm is developed by certain well-known

laws, and under certain conditions which are not found in the lives and character and conduct of the apostles. We do not say that the subject is without difficulties, but we do say, that the difficulties of the believer and of believing are not half so great as those of the unbeliever.

And as the story must be true or false, it is the part of reasonable beings to accept and hold fast the view that is attended with fewest objections, and is sustained by an overwhelming mass of positive evidence from the lips and lives of unimpeachable witnesses.

CHRIST'S ASCENSION AND SECOND ADVENT.

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead."

THE ascension of Christ, as Neander has observed, corresponds with His coming into the world. Any other end of an earthly life begun as was our Lord's would not have been consistent, or given a sense of fitness and completeness. It is impossible to construct the gospels, or construe such a life, on purely natural principles. We must survey it throughout from a higher point of view.

The Son of God could not be kept in the grave

nor be holden by any of the bands of death. Essentially immortal, He must rise from the dead and ascend into heaven, where He reigns at the right hand of the Father. This is the place of honor where all the angels of God worship Him. The scepter of His kingdom is a scepter of righteousness, and He must reign on high till He hath put all enemies under His feet. There He ever lives to make intercession for all who come to God by Him. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

If human nature was sanctified by the incarnation of the divine Word, much more is it glorified by the ascension of Christ, who is at once the Son of God and the Son of man. These are His characteristic designations, and it is the mystical union of these two natures in one person which fits our Lord to be the Savior of the world. And as by His death Christ made "a full, perfect, and all sufficient sacrifice" for the sins of men, both original and actual, so His mediatorial work is shared by no other. It is His alone. There is one and but one mediator, and we need no other. The merits of His sacrifice were sufficient to atone for our sins without any other offering, and His intercession is equally effectual and can but prevail. We may venerate all the saints, but may not exalt any of them to the place of honor which is filled by the adorable Redeemer of mankind.

All men may lawfully honor the Son as they honor the Father, but no man may honor any earthly saint as he is in duty bound to honor the Savior. He will not share His throne with mortals and sinners, who all need pardon in His name to obtain the peace of God, and to inherit the rest that remaineth for His children. On the other hand, He has promised that whosoever cometh to Him He will in no wise cast out, and He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him.

And like as we do believe our Lord to have died unto sin and risen unto righteousness, so He died unto sin once for all. Death hath no more dominion over Him. He hath the key of death and of Hades. As He ascended into heaven, so in like manner shall He come the second time unto our salvation, and to be adored by all them that believe. In that day, all that are in their graves shall come forth to judgment. The quick, that is the living, and the dead shall then appear before Him whom God hath appointed to judge the world in righteousness. The thought of this judgment and the fear of this great day are not so much in our minds as they were in the minds of our fathers. Nevertheless, it is a thought too prominent in every part of the Bible, too pervasive of Holy Scripture, to make its subversion or elimination possible.

Doubtless the terrors of the law and the fiery

ordeals of the great day, were once disproportionately dwelt on. In some cases the law was more preached than the gospel, which in a sense supersedes it. But we are not, therefore, at liberty to exclude the idea as improbable or inadmissible. On the contrary, we are bound to entertain and cherish it as one of the surest as well as most solemn verities of the Christian faith. It is enough that we are to be judged by One who has been tempted in all points as we are, One who is now our great High Priest and Intercessor. His judgment will be in righteousness and mercy, and in perfect accordance with our own moral instincts and convictions. The adoring hymn of the heavenly hosts will ever be "Righteous and true are Thy ways, O Lord God Almighty." Let us not fear, therefore, that in that day our moral sensibilities will be shocked. So far from this they will be confirmed, strengthened, stablished and settled forever and ever.

Such is the plain teaching of holy Scripture touching the ascension of our Lord into heaven, and such the office He now fills at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Now, as of old, there are those who deride the story of the ascension and scoff at the promise of His appearance the second time upon the earth. To all these, Christ is now, as in the apostles' day, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, even to them that stumble at the Word. But the promise of God standeth sure, having this seal, The

Lord knoweth them that are His. And Christ adds, that all they who are of the truth hear My voice and follow Me, and I will give unto them eternal life.

THE HOLY GHOST.

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He arose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

"I believe in the Holy Ghost."

We believe in the Holy Ghost, first as the Lord, and Giver of life. It was He who moved upon the face of the waters, educed order from chaos and light from darkness. Creation was quickened by the Spirit, and all life proceeds from Him. This is true of the lower forms of life, and of the higher, if possible, much more true.

All the higher aspirations of the human soul, in particular, He has kindled from the beginning. Hence David's prayer, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." This is one of many Old Testament texts which show that religion among the Jews was not so formal as many suppose. They felt their dependence on the Divine Spirit as well as we.

It was also their belief, as ours, that "He spake by the prophets." We need not here enter into the nice

distinctions of theologians as to the precise sense of this declaration. Suffice it to say, that He spake as never man did or could speak without Him. He spake to, and through, the prophets, as only God can speak to the human soul. And these things thus written of old, were written for our learning on whom the ends of the world are come. And we believe the prophets here include the apostles as well, for they, too, claim to speak by the Spirit. Their writings, also, attest this claim, and there are no others since their day that can compare with them as vehicles of Divine Truth.

The Holy Ghost is "the Comforter" promised by Christ and of whom He said, "If I go away I will send Him unto you." It was His mission to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us—and to convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment to come. And all this He has done from the beginning of the gospel; Christians are said to be temples of the Holy Ghost, for He dwells in them. Our first conviction of sin, our sense of guilt, our conscious need of a Divine Savior, our apprehension of this Savior, our faith in Christ as our Redeemer, our love to Him, the service we render Him, our conformity to His image in any degree, our growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,—all this we ascribe to the Holy Ghost, the influence of the Spirit in our hearts.

Not that the Spirit is merely an influence emanating from God the Father. "He proceedeth from the Father and the Son," from the Father as the fountain or source of Divinity, and from the Son by mission. But the original and proper procession of the Holy Ghost was from the Father, even as the Son was "the only begotten." These are among the deep things of God before which we do well to veil our faces and cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty."

The Holy Ghost is also "with the Father and Son together to be worshiped and glorified." As all men are to honor the Son even as they honor the Father, so they are to worship and glorify the Spirit. This is the Christian doctrine of God, not so formally stated as in the creeds, yet everywhere present in the New Testament, equally in the four Gospels and in the Epistles. The fullest and most sublime exposition of it is in the fourth Gospel, the most doctrinal of the four. What a legacy is that gospel to the Christian church! Thus far it has withstood the most vehement and persistent assaults upon it, and we doubt not it will ever stand firm as a pillar of light to guide the true Isarel through the wilderness of this world to the promised land.

And the Christian doctrine of the Holy Ghost is still more precious, if possible. To the Spirit of God we are indebted for the Holy Scriptures. The con-

secration of Christ to His work and His offering of Himself as a perfect and sufficient sacrifice for sin on the cross, was "through the Eternal Spirit." The preaching of the apostles was in demonstration of the Spirit, and all their real converts became such through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Nor is this a doctrine to darken counsel without wisdom, but is full of light and comfort to every true Christian. No man can "call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost." This is as true now as at the first, and will forever remain true. Let not this truth, then, be obscured, explained away, or denied. It is an essential part of the gospel.

"If a man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." All our works, all our pure aspirations, all our progress in the Christian life, we owe to His assistance.

"'Tis He that works to will,
'Tis He that works to do;
His is the power by which we act
His be the glory too!"

How beautifully is this truth of the gospel and our indebtedness to the Holy Spirit set forth in the hymn ever dear to the Christian heart.

"Our blest Redeemer, ere he breathed
His tender last farewell,
A Guide, a Comforter, bequeathed
With us to dwell.

"He came in semblance of a dove
With sheltering wings outspread,
The holy balm of peace and love
On earth to shed.

"He came sweet influence to impart,
A gracious, willing guest,
While he can find one humble heart
Wherein to rest.

"And His that gentle voice we hear,
Soft as the breath of even,
That checks each thought, that calms each fear,
And speaks of heaven.

"And every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness,
Are His alone.

"Spirit of purity and grace,
Our weakness, pitying, see,
O make our hearts Thy dwelling-place
And meet for Thee."

THE CHURCH.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic (*i. e.*, universal) church, the communion of saints.

Our Savior not only preached the glad tidings which we call the gospel, but established the Church, which is His "mystical body," "the blessed company

of all faithful people." This He did not arbitrarily, but in accordance with the constitutional and universal tendency of the human mind to convert abstractions into concrete, visible realities and forms.

Men, for example, are not satisfied with political theories, but invariably proceed to organize political principles into state constitutions and governments. So in religion we need not only truth, teaching, doctrines, and creeds, but a visible organization, in which the truth can be applied and made effective for the conversion of the world as well as the edification of Christians. The Church is an institution essential to our highest spiritual welfare, our growth in grace and the efficacy of all Christian teaching. It is a necessity of man's religious nature. Jesus knew what was in man, knew therefore, his needs in this regard, and established His Church, declaring that it should successfully withstand all assaults, so that not even the gates of hell should prevail against it. The rock on which it is founded is the divinity of Christ, and it is a clear recognition of this divinity which brings us into right relations with the Head of the Church. By this faith we become "members of Christ," and He is formed in our hearts the hope of glory.

But our visible connection with the Church, or union with the visible Church rather, is through baptism, the Lord's own ordinance to establish this rela-

tion. This is the reason why all who profess and call themselves Christians should be baptized persons, because Christ has commanded it. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." This is the apostolic commission and will hold good to the end of the world.

But some one will ask for a definition of the church what are its essential "notes," or elements. We answer this question in words so moderate, reasonable, and wise that we trust they will find general acceptance. "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

This is a definition which in substance was adopted by the reformed Churches both of England and of the Continent, and remains to this day the best in our own or any other language. It is brief, yet clear, consistent, and eminently scriptural. A visible Church is a congregation and assembly, a visible body having parts which cohere. Its members are "faithful," *i. e.* believing men, believing in Christ as their Savior and the only mediator with God. In such a congregation "the pure Word of God is preached," and not the wisdom of men, human philosophy. The gospel alone is held to be the power of God unto sal-

vation, the great theme of the Bible and of Christianity. Also "the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." They are both duly honored and celebrated as Christ's own symbols and signs and channels of grace, without which (divine grace) religion is a barren abstraction. It is true that there are differences of opinion among Christians as to "those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." But all agree as to the elements or matter of the same, water in baptism applied in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, and also of the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper as visible signs of His body and blood. Baptism is the sign of our profession, the sacrament by which we consecrate ourselves to the perpetual service of the Savior, and pledge ourselves to be His soldiers and servants unto the end of our lives. The Lord's Supper is a communion with Christ of the most exalted kind. Hence the apostle, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" This is indeed the communion of saints, the communion which saints have with their Savior, the highest they can know on earth, and pledge of a still more perfect union with Him in heaven. It is also and equally the symbol of their union and communion with each other as the mys-

tical body of Christ, the blessed company of all faithful people.

"On earth we want the sight
Of our Redeemer's face,
Yet, Lord, our inmost souls delight
To dwell upon Thy grace.

"And when we taste Thy love
Our joys diviner grow,
Unspeakable like those above,
And heaven begins below."

Such, then, are the essential notes of the Christian Church. All Christian congregations having these notes are true churches, and the sum of them constitute "the church Catholic," *i. e.*, the church universal on earth. But there are many other though lesser notes which we could enumerate, and would be glad to dilate on, if time and space permitted. Thus the Church is undoubtedly "the witness and keeper of Holy Writ." For to the Christian Church, as of old to the ancient Jewish church, are now committed "the oracles of God." It is to the Church we are indebted for the preservation and perpetuity of the sacred oracles, as well as their translation and dissemination into the languages and among the peoples of the earth. The Church has been careful to guard the Scriptures from corruption, addition, or subtraction. The Church hath also authority in matters of faith, but cannot ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written, or enforce anything

as necessary to salvation beside the same. Nor can the Church so expound one place of Scripture, that it is repugnant to another.

Thus, if the Church receives and requires her children to receive the Apostles' Creed, it is "because it may be proved by most certain warrant of Scripture." The cardinal principle from which the Church itself cannot depart in the least degree is that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation," so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

Finally, as to the preaching of the Word and ministering of the sacraments, it is a sound doctrine worthy to be received by all, that "It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard."

Such are a few of the ancient landmarks which no man should seek to remove or be allowed to remove. They were set up by the fathers not only of the primitive Church, but renewed by the second and not

inferior fathers of the Church, whom we honor by the name of "Reformers," and whose work we still call "the great Reformation." Let us hold fast to the form of sound words which they, and the apostles before them, gave to the Church for all time. Then will glorious things be spoken of "the city of our God," the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, therefore she shall not be moved. We will not fear for her stability and sure foundations, though the winds rage, the waters roar, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

"Mother of cities! o'er thy head
Bright peace, with healing wings outspread,
Forevermore shall dwell;
Let me, blest seat! my name behold
Among thy citizens enrolled,
And bid the world farewell."

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

Sin is a fact of human consciousness nearly universal. The number of persons who profess to have no sense of sin is very small. Doubtless the idea is often obscure, and the sense of it very superficial. But its reality is attested by all history, witnessed by the altars erected and the propitiatory sacrifices offered in all ages and countries. As Tertullian averred in the second century, even so now, "You will find

peoples so low in the scale of humanity as to be without art, science, or literature, but a people without altars and a worship you will nowhere find." And this worship invariably assumes the form of propitiatory offering and sacrifices for sin, the blood of bulls and of goats, which, however, can never take away sin, *i. e.*, the sense of moral unworthiness, of guilt.

Hence, apart from the gospel, there is no peace for the soul. The inventions of men have everywhere and always failed to compass it. Flagellations, pilgrimages, costly offerings, abstinence, voluntary poverty, a life of seclusion, retirement to the caves of the earth and dens of wild beasts,—all these and many other devices have failed. And failing to obtain peace by routine observances, many have sought to silence conscience by "making light of" the common consciousness of sin and guilt by repudiating it and declaring that sin is a chimera, a creation of the sickly imagination, the invention of priests. But "Leviathan is not so tamed." The ghosts of sin, so lightly put out of the way, will not down, but rise before men when least expected. Hence the success of all faithful preaching and the phenomena of revivals, or what answers to them, in all ages. Prophets, apostles, martyrs (witnesses of the truth), missionaries, are sure to obtain a hearing and a "confession of sin." Of the fact of human sinfulness, then, there can be no doubt. Sin is a transgression of the moral law, and

all have sinned. Mankind are far gone from their original righteousness.

This being admitted, the question of interest to all is that propounded by the ancients, "Can man be just (justified) with God? Is there forgiveness with Him?" Prophets and psalmists were commissioned to declare that "there is forgiveness with God." How beautiful on the mountains the feet of these inspired messengers proclaiming the good news, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Still clearer was the proclamation of the glad tidings by our blessed Savior,

> "When listening thousands gathered round
> And joy and gladness filled the place."

"The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins," in confirmation of which power, He saith to the sick of the palsy, "Take up thy bed and walk." And again, "This is My blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins." And the burden of the apostles' testimony was, "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." And He is the only Mediator. We need no human saint to intercede for us, for Jesus is able to save all who come to God by Him. And whosoever cometh He will in no wise cast out. The gospel, then, is the

power of God unto our salvation. The peace which it brings is the peace of God which passeth all human understanding, and keeps the heart and mind both in the knowledge and love of God. The blessing of God always attends the faithful proclamation of this glorious gospel, and will to the end of the world.

There are those who affect to look upon Christianity as an effete system, old, decrepit, and ready to vanish away. The truth is, that the gospel has just begun to take possession of its proper field, which is "the world." All other positive systems have failed to fit men even for this life. As for unbelief in all its forms, it nowhere engages earnestly in efforts to improve mankind. It does not even try to do it. It has no heart for the work, no sufficient motive. It limits itself to carping criticism in great, "swelling words."

The work of reforming the world is committed to Christians, to the Church of Christ. Much has been already done, and more will be accomplished in this and the next age, till the gospel is preached unto all nations. Many are the signs of the signal triumphs of the gospel in all lands, but none are more assuring than this of which we speak, the need of forgiveness felt by all, or nearly all, all who do not deceive themselves by saying that they "have no sin." Such deny the divine testimony that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." But as many as confess

and forsake their sins, shall find pardon and peace through "the precious blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin."

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

It is undoubtedly true that "life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel," and only there. The ancients often and anxiously discussed the question, but could arrive at no certain conclusion. As Cicero says, the philosophers did not so much prove as hope for it. With them, it was but a hope, hampered by many fears and doubts. Nor is modern thought more successful. When left to themselves, to their unaided reason, men differ and doubt as of old. Death is a fact which none can deny or dispute. Its effects, too, are visible and tangible. The imagination is appalled by the signs of dissolution, and death would have an easy victory but for the voice of revelation. "If a man die, shall he live again?"

This is the question, and it is of infinite moment to every man. The pantheist, the materialist and the atheist, all agree that personal consciousness cannot survive the dissolution of the body. According to them, the body with its functions is the man, and the exercise of the bodily functions is the life. With the cessation of these life ceases, and the man exists not after the breath leaves his body.

But the gospel teaches that after the dissolution of the body — the house we live in here — we shall have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, so that when we are absent from the body we shall be present with the Lord. Which belief comports most with the dignity of our nature, and answers best to our highest aspirations, is obvious enough. Hope springs immortal in the human breast, and we are prone to believe that even in death "we shall not all die." Whence this hope, unless from on high and implanted in the soul of man by his maker. Unless we are to survive the death of the body, our earthly life seems short, unsatisfactory, and incomplete. The strongest argument is the moral necessity of adjusting the inequalities of the present life, and the apparent necessity of righting the wrongs which are allowed to prevail for a season here. "For all these things God will bring thee into judgment" is the constant warning of holy writ to the wicked doer. "The wicked shall be driven away

in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death."

To confirm this hope, making it an anchor to the soul, Christ died and rose again. And he that hath this hope purifieth himself even as Christ is pure. So the apostles preached, and so all Christians believe, that Christ rose from the dead according to the Scriptures. And if Christ rose from the dead, it follows that "all who sleep in Christ God will bring with Him," when He shall appear the second time for our salvation, when the dead will be raised and all who are alive will be changed at His coming. We shall see Him as He is, and be made like unto Him, and "so shall we be ever with the Lord." This is the teaching of the New Testament. It is plain, consistent, and conclusive.

The life to come is not only endless, but endlessly progressive. The time will never arrive when we shall cease to live, or cease to grow. Our thoughts, our knowledge, our affections will continue and expand forever. Seeing that this is our faith, what holy persons ought we to be in our life and conversation.

But what of the resurrection? What are we to believe about that? All that the Scriptures teach. The fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians contains all that we can know about it, or need believe. There will be a resurrection of the

dead, both of the just and of the unjust. Christ is the first fruits from the dead, afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. The body is sown in corruption at death, and shall be raised in incorruption. It is sown in weakness, and shall be raised in power. It is sown a natural body and shall be raised a spiritual body. What a natural body is we know. What a spiritual body is we do not yet know. All that it is necessary to believe about it is, that it will be as well adapted to the future state as the natural body is to the present state. It will also be our body. We shall feel it to be so, and shall identify it as such. Whatever is essential to the identity of the body is the principal thing. What this is, no man on earth knows. It certainly is not the precise particles of matter which compose the body at any given time. For these may change, and do change repeatedly, without the body losing its identity; a fact which scatters to the winds the common objection to the doctrine of the resurrection. Doubtless God could preserve the material body intact even in the grave, but it is not necessary that He should do so.

Again, it is asked where is the soul after death and before the resurrection? The souls of the faithful freed from the burden of the flesh "are with God in joy and felicity," but they will not have their perfect consummation of bliss in body and soul till the morning of the resurrection.

Conclusion. We have thus given a plain account of the Apostles' Creed, the most simple, and Christian of all creeds, and one which we believe is destined to be restored to its ancient place as the generally accepted symbol of the Christian church. To hasten the day of its general adoption, it behooves all sincere Christians candidly to examine it, "seriously considering what Christianity is, and what the truths of the gospel are; and earnestly beseeching Almighty God to accompany with His blessing every endeavor for promulgating them to mankind in the clearest, plainest, most affecting, and majestic manner, for the sake of Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and Savior."

CHURCH UNITY.

Many plans have been proposed, but none of them meet with much favor beyond the boundaries of the several churches issuing them.

Thus, the Roman Catholics make submission to the Roman Bishop an essential condition; Anglicans, acceptance of the historic Episcopate; Lutherans, consubstantiation. Protestants will not concede ecclesiastical authority to the Bishop, or Church, of Rome. The Historic Episcopate tendered by Anglicans might be accepted, were it not burdened with the High Church claim of an absolute, unbroken Apostolic succession, without which there is, and can be, no valid ministry, or church.

Evidently the time for a corporate union of the Protestant churches with each other, and then of these with the Greek and Roman churches, is not yet. Protestant churches have proved their right to be reckoned as integral parts of the Christian host, actually occupying and tilling portions of "the field which the Lord has blessed." "The field is the world," but it will never be cultivated in common by Christians, till mutual concessions become the rule.

In the new order, the Anglo-Saxon race will claim and keep the prominence to which it is entitled by

its relative influence in Christendom. In other words, the relation of the Anglo Saxon race to Christendom, must correspond to, and equal, that of the Greek and Latin races in the early Church, and for the same reason.

The growth and gradual ascendancy of the Roman Church, is by no means so mysterious as many seem to suppose. The city of Rome had long been looked up to as the capital of the world. What wonder, then, that she should aspire to be considered and called "Mother and Mistress of Churches," or that this claim should have been so generally conceded.

To-day, Rome and Italy have fallen far behind England, Germany, and the United States; and the relative greatness of these latter countries increases steadily. As to papal infallibility, the more it is asserted, the more it is, and will be, resisted, not only by other churches, but by Roman Catholic civil rulers.

For similar reasons, sacerdotalism must cease in the Reformed Churches, for, as the great Bishop Lightfoot, writing on 1 Cor. 12, and Eph. 4, said: "There is an entire silence about priestly functions. For the most exalted office in the Church, the highest gift of the Spirit conveyed no sacerdotal right which was not enjoyed by the humblest member of the Christian community."

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